RURAL

Jersey Country Life Magazine

Issue 33 | Winter 2020

Crime *does* pay...

...for best-selling crime novelist Peter James, now living in Jersey

The rural environment

Meet a carbon farmer, Glyn Mitchell, and a composting campaigner, Karen Gray

'Great tastes' at the Chilli Kitchen

Success for Lesley Garton's home-made produce at the national 'Great Tastes' awards

WIN

£500 to spend at David Hick Interiors

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Welcome

It has become a customary part of the so-called festive season to lament the materialistic character of the modern Christmas: the round of office parties, excessive eating and drinking, shopping and over-spending, frazzled nerves as preparations don't meet the necessary level of perfection... surely, it has been often said, the real spirit of Christmas should be different to all that?

Be careful what you wish for, as Aesop said, lest it come true. This year, Christmas is indeed different - more different than we ever expected. But we don't seem to be enjoying the difference too much.

How nice it would be if this year, as in past years, we could meet up with friends and colleagues, enjoy a few drinks - and then some more - and to enjoy feasting and laughter and good company, defying the cold and the murk outside. But in our feasting we can't even shout at the devil - shouting is not allowed these days.

At the time of writing, the Covid restrictions are thankfully not as severe in Jersey as they are elsewhere, but what might happen between now and Christmas is anyone's guess. Christmas might be better than we fear; it might be worse.

'Christmas with Covid' is the title of one of our articles in this issue, showing what hotels and restaurants in Jersey are doing to mitigate this uncongenial 'new normal' and to add some festivity to this un-festive season.

The phrase 'stay home - keep safe' is becoming as common - and as meaningful, in many cases - as the salutation 'yours faithfully' or 'yours sincerely'. Masks are becoming an ever more common sight - at least you can't eat or drink at the same time as wearing one (without making a nasty mess).

In normal times, in this winter issue, the RURAL team and I would have been delighted to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This year - what can we wish you? Probably only 'a digital Christmas and a virtual New Year'. Nonetheless, I hope that we can all find some joy, at least, in this bleak midwinter.

Alasdair Crosby | Editor
www.ruraljersey.co.uk

Front cover image:

Lesley Garton of 'The Chilli Kitchen'
Photo by Gary Grimshaw
See page 12

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At a time when some of the locations where RURAL would customarily be available are either closed or not anxious to provide potential infection 'contact points' by stocking free magazines, we do recommend taking out a postal subscription to have RURAL delivered to your letter box as soon as a new edition comes off the press.

The magazine itself remains free of charge for the foreseeable future; the postal subscription is only to cover the cost of postage: £10 for the four annual issues if posted to a Jersey address; UK and other Channel Islands: £12; Europe: £24; Rest of world £40.

For further details, or to be to be included in the distribution list of our periodic e-mail newsletter, RURAL POST, e-mail **editorial@ruraljersey.co.uk**. See also our website, **www.ruraljersey.co.uk**

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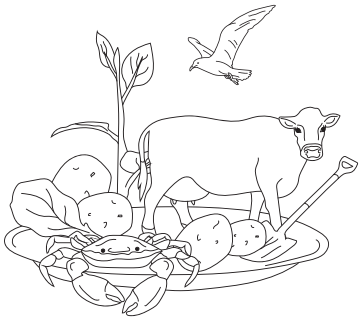

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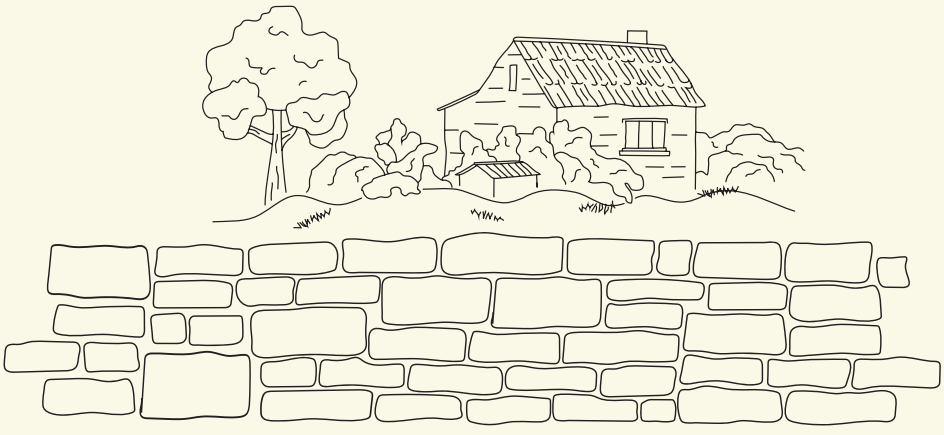
Over the wall



A RURAL view

The battle lines between those who enjoy their meat and those who abhor it for ethical or compassionate reasons are entrenched and it is certainly not for RURAL to interpose itself in the firing line; we merely wish to point out mildly that the human species has been omnivorous since before time began... before moving on to discuss the business of meat production in Jersey.

To quote from RURAL website contributor, Russell Carrington, until recently the secretary of the Pasture-Fed Livestock Association:

'In trying to achieve truly sustainable land management we can learn a lot from nature; currently two-thirds of the UK's landscape is grassland. But a grassland ecosystem can only self-sustain itself with the help of specialist ruminant animals like cattle and sheep with four stomachs. These ruminants fill a unique ecological niche by harnessing the power of anaerobic digestion to metabolise low energy fibrous green leafy material (that the human digestive system cannot process) into human edible foods and clothing like meat, milk, leather and wool. In grasslands these animals return dung and urine to the soil which fertilises the regrowth of plants. This system has existed in equilibrium for millennia and has even been fundamental to creating soil in the first place.'

Jersey is eminently suitable for farming animals. Dairy farming with the Jersey cow and beef farming with the Jersey-Angus cross both offer an irreplaceable way of turning grazing land, permanent pasture, and poor-quality rough grazing into much sought-after, internationally renowned and high-quality sources of nutrition.

Producing home-grown food is also a desirable way of managing the land and has the added benefits of creating growth opportunities in the local economy as well as providing some degree of food security, the importance of which has yet again become all too clear during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

So, given the fact that it has been estimated that Jersey meat imports total more than £35 million a year, to what extent could we be more self-reliant on local production?

The biggest commercial opportunities lie with the beef production from the Jersey-Angus cross. The meat is of undeniable good quality, has good marbling and is very tasty. It is appreciated by top restaurant chefs and by families for their domestic feasts. Importantly, it utilises many of those dairy calves that would otherwise go to the knacker's yard.

It is natural for the idea of killing baby calves to seem abhorrent, but surely better to give it some life and to kill an older animal as part of a sustainable farming and meat production system? It would be advantageous to minimise the number of calves that are euthanized and at the same time to create a new business that would provide both local food and local employment.

Jersey can sell all the beef it produces at the moment; a good commercial position to be in - the only problem is keeping up with the demand. Jersey imports meat but does not export any, so all in all, there is scope to produce a lot more in the Island.

But, as with any sort of agriculture, the Island is impeded by the fact that there is simply not enough land and no large sector of farmland producing straw for bedding or wheat for animal fodder.

As we don't have the capacity to produce high volumes of cheap food, Jersey-Angus beef is always going to be a speciality product, providing good quality local food but only in limited volumes.

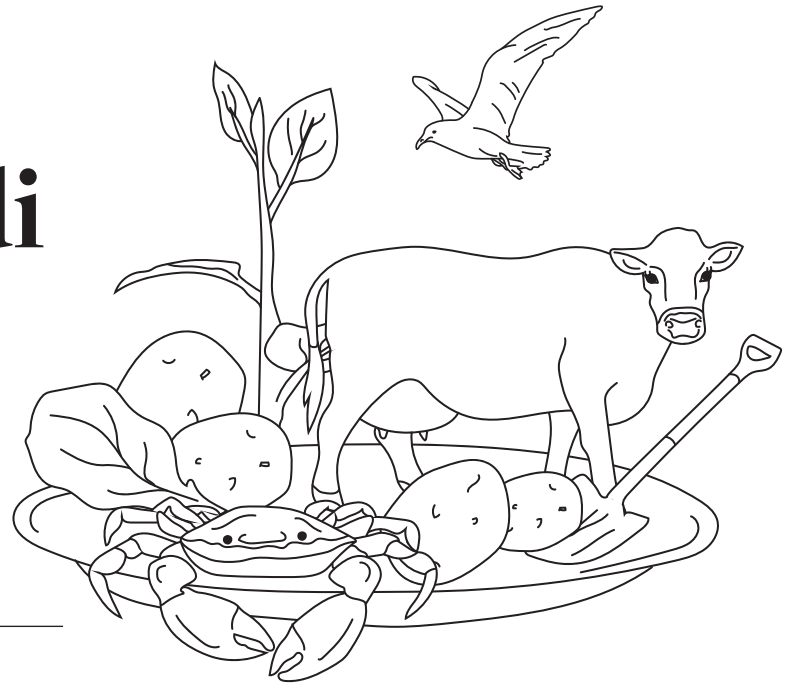
Veal production has been tried on occasion but been never really successful; it has never cracked the market.

The lack of sufficient farmland is also a major factor in inhibiting the growth of pork or lamb production. As far as poultry is concerned, this has been tried by several producers in the past, who have found sadly that the only way to raise poultry profitably for their meat (as opposed to their eggs) is to raise them on a very large scale. Otherwise the production costs per bird are so high that they are unsellable - certainly if chickens can be bought from the supermarket at a fraction of the price.

The Island is fortunate to have its own abattoir, which after major troubles some years ago, is now running smoothly. It will always be a cost to government since Jersey is too small to allow it to pay its own way. If funding were removed it would have to close, so it is necessary to continue funding it.

So let us hope that our sources of supply from elsewhere remain open, despite Covid and Brexit and anything else that the future might be hiding up its sleeve, and let us continue to support our farmers and food producers who are building our resilience with local, high quality products.

The Jersey Salmagundi



A mixed salad of events and news, with a bit of this, that and the other thrown in

Royal Progress

Update on this year's Jersey Royal season, by William Church, sales and marketing director of Jersey Royal Company Ltd

At the time of writing in early November the process of grading and 'standing' seed is well-underway and the first area of indoor Jersey Royals to supply the early wholesale market trade for the 2021 season has already been planted, so the mood is generally positive and optimistic for the year ahead.

This however doesn't reflect on a lot of what else is going on in the world and the numerous challenges faced during the 2020 season. Covid-19 is certainly impacting many walks of life in many different ways.

When the pandemic came to the fore in March, Jersey farmers were fortunate to already have a large number of people in the Island planting the export crop.

Aside from the practicalities of planting, growing and harvesting a crop the pandemic has had noticeable impacts in shopping habits and the access to different markets.

Jersey Royals are very often an 'impulse purchase', so with fewer trips to supermarkets by shoppers there were less opportunities for a 'repeat purchase', but conversely many shoppers looked to buy larger packs. Traditional shoppers (the older members of society) stayed at home and so weren't buying Royals.

Online shopping channels did very well.

Sales of loose, unwashed potatoes practically stopped as there was a fear factor about contamination through touch. The wholesale market trade that supplies hotels and restaurants died almost overnight at the beginning, but then saw a remarkable and positive turnaround which is attributed to independent greengrocers experiencing an upturn in business as shoppers opted to use them rather than the larger supermarkets.

The annual PR campaign was reviewed to make sure that consumers were targeted in the best ways, and there was certainly a lot of interest in the daytime television slots and recipe suggestions.

Covid is continuing to impact workers and businesses with returning members of staff having to self-isolate. Farmers are managing 'bubbles' of people in different accommodation blocks, but there is naturally still some concern.

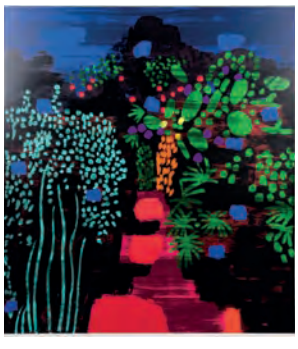
The success of any season relies heavily on the weather, and 2019-20 was particularly challenging. A wet winter disrupted and delayed planting, and the early crops didn't grow well. May then saw five weeks of drought that further impacted yields, before it finally rained heavily in early June to boost late season production. So all in all it was a very difficult season to manage, and one that the farmers would rather forget.

To end on a more upbeat note, the cover crops that are planted following the potato season flourished with the June rain, to the extent that there were reports of plagues of white butterflies in the Island! Increased biodiversity that provides functioning ecosystems is important and a real success story of which local farmers are rightfully very proud.

CCA Galleries International Exhibition schedule | Winter 2020

Barbara Rae *Ice Wall*
Avanaata, 2020
Ltd ed silkscreen by Barbara Rae

Barbara Rae *Ice Wall*
Arctic Glacier, 2020
Ltd ed silkscreen by Barbara Rae



Bruce McLean *Red Garden Path*
2018, Ltd ed silkscreen with hand painted embellishments, ed 75

Bruce McLean *Tall Dutch Tulips*
2013, Ltd ed silkscreen with collaged elements, ed 75

25 Nov - 29 Jan

Handmade: original prints
Original prints and new editions by established as well up and coming artists, including Dan Baldwin, Lucie Bennett, Sir Peter Blake, Rose Blake, Frank Bowling, Barbara Rae, Bruce McLean, Jackie Tsai and Gavin Turk.

CCAI is known for its' longstanding and real relationships with the artists it works with. Whether this is mentoring and supporting local artists through the Jersey Summer Exhibition or working and collaborating with International artists and Royal Academicians at Worton Hall Studios. This enables us to bring rare and important work and the artists that make it to a Jersey audience.

2 and 3 Dec, 3.30 -5.00

Deconstructing the myth: silk screen printing and live discussion with Gillian Duke from Worton Hall Studios
The discussion will be followed by a private view of the exhibition Handmade with Gallery Director, Sasha Gibb. Tickets cost £20, are limited and must be booked in advance from the gallery. Visit ccagalleriesinternational.com for further details or call the gallery 01534 739900 for bookings. .

14 Dec – 29 Jan

2020: a year in vision
photography exhibition by Glen Perotte. An exhibition of 55 high definition portraits taken throughout the year. The exhibition is about the people and is accompanied by their reflections on 2020. The C-type prints combine 6 high resolution prints to give a very honest, detailed and candid look at the sitters. A book of the exhibition is also for sale, with all proceeds going to Jersey Hospice.

Glen Perotte
Blair Tallibard (Horticulturist)

The gallery is open Monday - Friday 12.00 – 6.00 and outside these times by appointment. For details of events and exhibitions in 2021, visit www.ccagalleriesinternational.com. CCA Galleries International, 10 Hill Street, St Helier, JE3 4UA.

Success of a Jersey Charity Speaks Volumes

Despite many of us finding more time to read during Lockdown, one of our best loved local suppliers has had to temporarily cease trading - for now. This year's 'Biggest Book Sale' in October had to be cancelled.

The chairman of Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA), Ken Syvret, described how they've had to adapt, since new social distancing norms have had a large impact on the Charity's events programme.

Naturally disappointed, Ken explained the complex nature of the Sale. 'All books are boxed spine up in categories ranging from Art to Wine then, for the Sale, transported by lorries and vans to the venue. With over 50 helpers over the weekend it just could not happen this year, restrictions have inevitably taken priority.'

Books are still welcome, however, and Ken has just arranged for more storage at St Ouen at the old Methodist Church. 'I've just taken 350 boxes of hard back novels ready for the next sale,' he said.

With a committee of just seven, it's incredible how much they've raised since the charity's first sale in 1994. 'It's made almost half a million pounds, together with paperback and hard back novels and we're determined to reach that goal.'

A guide dog is not cheap 'In a life time it costs over £50,000, including its training, food, vets, etc,' Ken explained.

'Training starts after a year old and on retirement it can stay with the person if they have a family and it's convenient - it's very much part of the household.'

He continued: 'When you notice a blind person with their dog - the team work and obvious love and trust between them is wonderful to see. You can't help wanting to become involved. The best part is standing at the Book Sale and welcoming people into the room full of books. I'm so grateful to everyone; it is a real social occasion and a community atmosphere.'

Despite many book lovers looking forward to October's Sale each year, originally there used to be just two main annual events, the annual ball at West Park Pavilion (a building sorely missed by some) and the annual Garden Party.

There are currently three trained Guide Dogs in the island, testament to the continuous exceptional work of the charity and the sale's popularity. Remaining optimistic for the sale's future - Ken concluded: 'If anyone is searching for a particular book, they are welcome to contact me and I'll do my best to locate it'

- Kieranne Grimshaw

Samarès Manor Expands Range

The managing director of Samarès Manor, Caryl Kemp, reports: 'Early on at the start of Covid, you asked, and we delivered. We were, pre-Covid, very much a small garden centre, focussing on herbaceous perennials, lavenders and roses.

Now, we can offer shrubs, fruit trees, including Jersey cider apples and pears and a huge stock of roses, climbers, several types of compost and farmyard manure.

In 2021 we shall be growing most of our herbs, bedding and vegetable plants with grow bags for those with limited space. We are excited! The stock list and fruit catalogue is available on the Samarès Manor website.'

The School & the Meadow

A meadow has been gifted for the children of Grouville School and other youth groups like Scouts and Guides, to allow them to become involved in conservation projects and to gain all the benefits of learning in nature.

The meadow, which is adjacent to the school, was the property of the McGugan family; Arthur McGugan, a much loved and respected former teacher, died three years ago and a family trust was created to find a beneficial use for the field, given the late Mr McGugan's lifelong interest in education.

Trustee Dr Maggie Esson said: 'In reality, the restoration of the meadow meant a battle with nettles and bindweed, not to mention a pond clogged up with bulrushes. Our plans include making the meadow accessible to all, including a wheelchair-friendly path, which had just been started.'

The new meadow was 'inaugurated' on 19 October, unfortunately with no Grouville School pupils present, because of the Covid 19 restrictions.

Present was the Grouville Constable, John Le Maistre. He said: 'We're so grateful to the McGugan family for donating the meadow to a newly formed charitable trust that allows Grouville School children and other youth groups to enjoy and learn from an environmentally managed meadow in the parish.'

The project is sponsored by Kleinwort Hambros whose staff are supporting the restoration of the meadow through their CSR scheme.

One of the schoolchildren involved in the project, Nathan (10) said: 'It's a chance to breathe and be outside with no noise and lights'; Fern (7) said: 'It makes me feel happy feeling the air, smelling the smells and hearing the sounds of nature.'

The RJA&HS

Jersey in Autumn Time

Following the success of Jersey in Spring Time launched in March to help everyone during the difficult time of Covid-19 lockdown, it has been decided to do this again to celebrate Autumn Time in Jersey of all that is good in our Island, gardens, allotments and farms. This is for everyone to get involved in - I would love for you to send your photographs and video footage to me by email on rachelle@royaljersey.co.uk and here are some ideas:

- Autumn Trees and Shrubs in our lanes and hedgerows
- Flowers and plants in your garden, greenhouse or indoors
- Your Allotment and what you are growing
- Young people involved in growing at home, schools, nurseries and forest schools
- Autumn Harvest including Fruit
- Woodland areas
- All aspects of Jersey Agriculture i.e. cows in fields, being milked and on the farm, vegetable planting and processing
- Harvesting from the sea and Jersey beaches
- Baking at home and school
- Honesty Boxes'

Honorary Life Membership

The society reports that Graham De Gruchy has been given Honorary Life Membership this year for all his hard work over many years. Graham and his late brother ,Wilfy, spent many hours organising and setting up the FJ Ahier Country Gardens and marking out the plots over 11 years ago. Graham was the Horticultural Chairman for six years until 2019.

He will be presented with his Honorary Life Membership when it is safe for all the Members to get together - which all hope will be soon.

- Rachelle Robinson, RJA&HS Horticultural Secretary

Genuine Jersey Skin

A new range of cosmetics and toiletries using local ingredients has been launched in Jersey.

Jersey Skin, a member of Genuine Jersey, is the brainchild of Benjamin Martin - and it was born thanks to coronavirus. Benjamin's job as theatrical operations manager with Norwegian Cruise Lines was due to start in March. He came to Jersey to drop off his dog and his car, and then lockdown happened.

Faced with being stuck in Jersey with no income, he turned to researching and then making skincare products, which include face creams, body butters, lip balms and shampoo bars.

The first six key ingredients were Jersey Apple Pectin, Jersey Seaweed, Jersey Sea Salt, Jersey Lavender, Jersey Lemon Verbena and Jersey Beeswax.

'We are an all-natural and cruelty-free company,' he said. 'We are also totally vegan, except for where we use beeswax, which is sourced Islandwide. Jersey Skin is a family company, based in Grouville where we grow or harvest all our key ingredients.'

He said he gets help from his mother, an Oxford chemistry graduate, and his father, who is a 'green-fingered handyman who grows lavender, lemon verbena and apples'.

Once he had worked out the chemistry, he also had to figure out the branding and packaging and getting his product launched.

'Our ethos is to use sustainable ingredients and minimal packaging and to re-use and reduce plastic as much as possible. We are also ocean friendly as all our ingredients, once used, will naturally dissolve and not harm wildlife,' he said.

'Our product names are all in Jèrriais as we wanted to emphasise that this truly is a product of the Island.

For example, our lip balms are called Baîsi which means 'a touch of the lips'.

'There seems to be a groundswell of support from customers who love to buy local. They like that I am using ingredients like local apple pectin and local seaweed, and I am using local names in some ranges, like Bonne Nuit.'

Benjamin (31), who went to St Michael's, Victoria College and Hautlieu, says that, thanks to coronavirus, he has no idea yet whether he will get back to the cruise liners and so his sole focus at the moment is his new business.

'I always thought I'd like to run my own business but it has come sooner than expected. It's worked out well,' he said. 'I found that I really enjoyed the researching of products, and mixing the ingredients to make things work has been quite a process. It's trial and error to get the balance when you are emulsifying and preserving.'

Benjamin has been selling at pop-up shops and craft fairs but he also has his own website, **www.jerseyskin.com**. Jersey Skin can also be found on Instagram and Facebook.

- Caroline Spencer

Reduce Your Carbon Footprint With ATF

Motorists and home heating oil customers can choose to offset their carbon emissions from their own vehicle and heating oil usage with ATF Fuels.

ATF will offset carbon emissions when customers purchase fuel by supporting environmental conservation and restoration projects in Jersey, as well as contributing to accredited international carbon offset projects.

The principle of the scheme allows for customers to neutralise the impact of their emissions by paying an additional 3p per litre when they fill up their car or top up their home heating oil tank.

At the ATF forecourts at Augrès and Maufant there is a 'carbon neutral pump', which is clearly marked in green. When ordering home heating oil, customers will be asked if they would like to offset their carbon emissions.

Jonathan Best, director of ATF Fuels, said: 'We believe it is necessary to give our customers the choice to offset the impact of the emissions created from their fuel usage. This scheme provides an affordable alternative for people who want to address the impact of their emissions by offsetting fuel purchases.'

The scheme is uniquely impactful, as the price of 'offset' goes towards projects that absorb harmful emissions or prevent them from being produced in the future, as well as to restorative environmental projects local to the point of offset.

Mr Best continued: "We will still sell home heating oil and road fuels at our forecourts at our regular low prices if our customers choose not to offset their carbon emissions. In addition, we continue to be the only Channel Island fuel supplier that complies with UK legislation that requires petrol and diesel to have a bio-fuel content of at least 5% and 7% respectively.'

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The chilli kitchen

This year the Chilli Kitchen has again achieved success at the 'Great Tastes' Awards. Alasdair Crosby met the proprietor, Lesley Garton

Anyone attending country events or markets over the past decade is liable to have met Lesley Garton at her Chilli Kitchen stall. Displayed on her stand are her homemade chutneys, relishes, jams, cordials... There is always a different selection, depending on the season and the produce available.

As she said: 'I like to follow the seasonality of all the produce and to use it when it is available, at the height of each respective season, when it is at its best.

'But there is such an abundance of local produce - more than enough - and I don't need to do anything more, really - apart from ginger for my lemon and ginger pickle. For jam I have damson, blackberry and apple, strawberry, rhubarb... I don't need much more. If it grows here - great; if it grows naturally, in its own season, even better.

> **"I like to follow the seasonality of all the produce and to use it when it is available, at the height of each respective season, when it is at its best**

'It is pointless to import this, that and the other - and the nice thing about running out of something is that you can look forward to enjoying it again next season.'

This year she has achieved distinction once again in the Great Taste Awards, this time, for her lemon and ginger pickle. It is a strong pickle that bites back: very good, for example with a mild English cheese.

'It is also wonderful when a national organisation comes along and pats you on the back. I can handle that easily!'

The inspiration for her lemon-based chutneys came from a neighbour, whose greenhouses she can see from her garden: 'I had these lemons, and I wanted to do more with them than just make lemon squash or marmalade; I wanted to do a modern chutney. It took two or three years to develop, but when I was really happy with it, I submitted it to the 'Great Taste' Awards!'

She admitted she is passionate about 'modern' chutneys: 'They do go with a wider range of food. I also have a similar style "winter spiced rhubarb chutney", which goes well with cheese, pâté and pie. For Christmas I go back to traditional flavours, such as a damson chutney (without chillies but with a lot of ginger and garlic)... it still has that modern twist coming through. I also love doing a Victoria plum chutney, but I can never ever get enough plums or damsons.'

She does not grow produce herself - as she says, there are plenty of people about who can grow food better than she can - but she is a grateful recipient of produce from friends and neighbours. Tomatoes, peppers and chillies come from La Chasse Nurseries; Homefield Farm is a major supplier - especially of onions - and it sources produce for her from around the Island; contributions also come from Peter Le Cuirot in Grouville and Joe Freire in St Lawrence - everybody has given her terrific support and help, she said, and have been generous with their time and their produce.

'They know my business is not a huge, money-spinning concern. They are interested, and want to help, and they like the very local element - the fact that everything I use comes from local fields and orchards and gardens.'

"I had these lemons, and I wanted to do more with them than just make lemon squash or marmalade; I wanted to do a modern chutney. It took two or three years to develop, but when I was really happy with it, I submitted it to the 'Great Taste' Awards!

Next year will be the tenth year of the Chilli Kitchen, during which time she has been going every year to markets with her range of produce. It has been a disturbed decade politically and economically, from the banking crisis onwards to Brexit and Covid: 'From 2010 nothing has been straightforward in the world - everything has been up and down; there's been no certainty, anymore.

It's kind of hard to know where you are, - you just have to keep taking it on the chin, keep turning it around, and if I have to work a little bit harder for a little bit less, there's no point crying, because you just have to go on and make it work.'

During the pandemic this year she has been grateful for the help of Fetch.je to promote her wares and to all the small shops who took her produce during the lock-down period.

“In parts of France, for example, if you see someone fishing, they are probably not fishing for fun, but fishing for dinner. People keep rabbits out in the back, grow their own vegetables, etc - they have more time and less money! There will be a bit of a re-adjustment back to that over here as well, I think, if people continue to work at home...

‘I don’t want to sell on line, particularly - I am not a great fan of social media. I much prefer to meet my customers and to talk to them. Nor is it practical to post heavy jars and their contents. I am a one-man band and there is only so much I can do on my own.

I did some contingency planning before the spring lockdown, ordering pallets of glass and plenty of blank labels (I print them myself). For the rest of the time I was either stirring pots or stuck up the top of a tree - I spent a lot of time up trees this year!’

What gave her the idea of starting the Chilli Kitchen? Was it a development of a childhood hobby?

‘Not at all, she replied. ‘Just an interest I developed one year when there were huge amounts of apples fallen from the trees in the garden and covering my lawn - and I don’t really have a sweet tooth! So I gave up trying to get rid of them and making endless apple pies and started using them as “spiced apple chutney” for Christmas presents. The business grew from there.’

Part of the attraction of her work for her is its diversity: finding the produce, picking it, printing her own labels, doing her own books, delivering to shops, meeting her customers or putting on evening events - four recent sell-out events for the National Trust, for example, on 'how to make chutney'...

She does get some help from friends and family, such as in the lugging around and construction of stands for events, or helping at her stall, or doing deliveries... 'I receive all sorts of tiny little bits of help. People seem to like the business and are happy to pitch in, do a bit, pick a bit of fruit or just lend a hand generally. It's a very simple business in a way - I go out, pick things, turn them into something which I throw in a jar and get paid for it. There's no staff, no equipment except for a couple of big pans, I just find it easier to keep things small and simple.'

> **"The small, local aspect of life has improved as a result of lockdown; I have definitely found some more customers - and many people are experimenting with making their own homemade produce - there could be a real resurgence**

This year has been a good year for wild blackberries ('the absolute god of flavours - and but they have to be wild') and elderberries ('after picking them you look as if you been murdering somebody'). It has been difficult to obtain her normal volume of strawberries from her usual supplier, Joe Freire, since with lockdown, so many people were walking past and buying from his roadside honesty stall.

She continued: 'The small, local aspect of life has improved as a result of lockdown; I have definitely found some more customers - and many people are experimenting with making their own homemade produce - there could be a real resurgence.

'In parts of France, for example, if you see someone fishing, they are probably not fishing for fun, but fishing for dinner. People keep rabbits out in the back, grow their own vegetables, etc - they have more time and less money!

There will be a bit of a re-adjustment back to that over here as well, I think, if people continue to work at home... I am very much a supporter of that ... so long as they don't start using all the available fruit, then I'll be happy!'

This pre-Christmas season, Lesley's stall is at the Liberty Wharf Small Business Pop Up market from Thursdays to Saturdays until 20 December.

Food undelicacies

Chlorinated chicken and hormone treated beef have been much in the news and on social media of late. What is the likelihood of these foods ending up in a Jersey shop or catering outlet? By Steve Baxter, partner in a new Jersey-based specialist in agriculture and food policy and support, Tautenay Ltd

As the UK leaves the EU it will no longer be bound by the regulations that stipulate that these and similar methods of production are not allowed and that food produced by these methods of production cannot be sold.

Although the UK government has chosen not to write these rules into either its Agriculture Bill or its Trade Bill, there is a fear among many that if the UK strikes a trade deal with the US, the doors will be open to imports of these foods and that the public will have no choice in the matter. Moreover, big-business in the UK might be tempted by the lower production costs of more intensive poultry and livestock farming.

> **“ If you need to wash your chicken in chlorine, then you must have got something wrong along the way**

The arguments revolve around the acceptability of different methods of food production. In Western Europe (not only the EU but Switzerland, Norway and others too) there has been a view taken of food safety that can be summarised as: ‘if you need to wash your chicken in chlorine, then you must have got something wrong along the way.’

In the US, the view has been taken that the process doesn’t matter, provided that food is safe at the point of sale. Similarly, in Western Europe there has been a view that the use of hormones and beta-agonists as growth promoters in stock farming presents a risk to human health and should therefore be prohibited. Not so in the US.

Underneath these differences in approach have been divergent views on ‘intensive’ farming methods - typically unpopular in Western Europe (as demonstrated by the stringent farm animal welfare regulations in the EU and EFTA States), but much less so in the US.

However, because the US allows the use of hormones in cattle production, it does not mean that all of their cattle are raised in this manner.

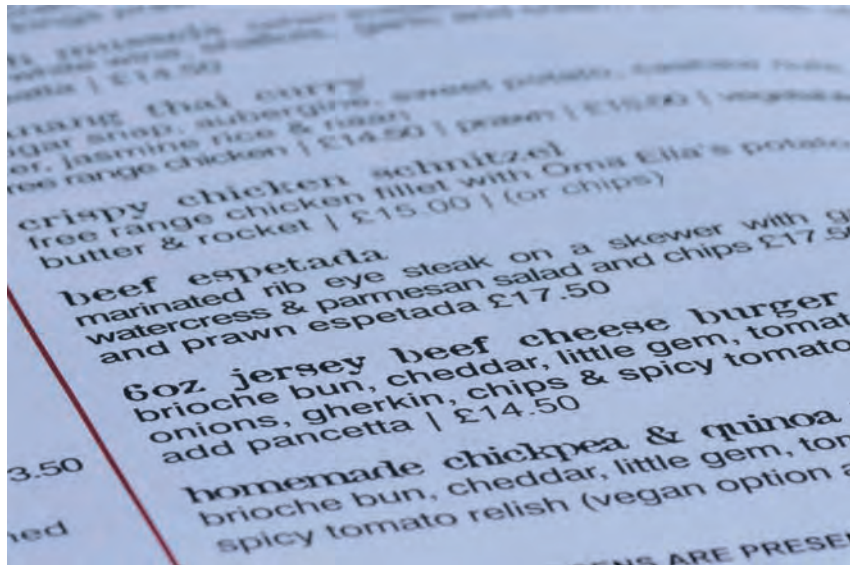
In a similar trend to the market diversification we have seen in the European poultry industry, in which large multi-national firms have learned to adopt multiple production systems to serve the different parts of the market, the US cattle industry has recognised that there is a market for non-hormone treated beef.

So, if the UK deregulates and opens the doors to chlorinated chicken and hormone treated beef, what then for Jersey? For a start, Jersey maintains its own prohibitions and restrictions on imports, separate to the UK, and should not be compelled to deregulate. It is down to Jersey's politicians to decide whether or not to allow these products into the Island.

But if Jersey, for whatever reason, opts to deregulate, there are two further lines of defence. The first of these is the retailers. UK based retailers including Waitrose, the Co-op, Morrisons, Tesco and M&S all have policies prohibiting, among other things, the use of growth promoters in their own brand foods. It is highly unlikely that any of these would move towards the inclusion of contentious foods in any products whilst there is clear public concern.

The second line of defence is contingent on the actions of Jersey's restaurants and cafés. The challenge to Jersey residents who want to avoid chlorine washed chicken, hormone treated beef, (or any other of these currently prohibited foods) will be in the eating-out sector; and the challenge to Jersey's restaurants and cafés will be to ensure that their customers are not put off by the idea that their meat may have been produced in a manner they may find upsetting.

Here again there could be a 'simple' workaround, since if Jersey's eateries can demonstrate the provenance of their meat then it will be possible for customers to choose.



It would be a significant move for Jersey's service outlets to let diners know where their meat has come from and how it has been farmed.

It will require wholesalers and all those in the supply chain to play their part by allowing a degree of scrutiny they might be quite unused to. But it is by no means impossible and it would set Jersey apart from other areas of the UK. Even better if that provenance is Jersey!

Meet the farmer the gin and tonic sausage

The delicacies from Jon Hackett's Brooklands Farm are widely distributed around the Island's fine food outlets. Alasdair Crosby met the man behind the pork

'Fancy a gin and tonic?'

'I don't mind if I do,' as Colonel Chinstrap of ITMA would have said. But as we were at the time in the commercial kitchen at Brooklands Farm, St Brelade, with the various chilled containers full of pork rather than gin, the question was slightly surprising.

The farmer and butcher, Jon Hackett, opened one of the containers and produced a string of sausages. 'Gin and Tonic sausages,' he explained.

How ingenious! How - or why - did he think of combining these two rather different comestible items?

'I do enjoy my evening gin and tonic,' he replied. 'One evening I was sitting enjoying my drink while looking at a farming programme on the TV; the subject was speciality sausages and I thought to myself: "Why not make a gin and tonic sausage?'

The proportion of gin to sausage is one bottle gin to ten kilos sausage meat. At the next opportunity for a sausage tasting at home, the sausages went under the grill: yes, the 'tonic' taste was discernible on the tongue, but diners would most probably survive a breathalyser test unscathed if they had to drive after consuming a g&t sausage.

"I do enjoy my evening gin and tonic,' he replied. 'One evening I was sitting enjoying my drink while looking at a farming programme on the TV; the subject was speciality sausages and I thought to myself: "Why not make a gin and tonic sausage?

His products - labelled as 'Me and the Farmer' - are widely distributed around the Island : pork pies, pasties, sausages, belly pork, chops, joints of leg and shoulder... as he said, it would be quicker to list where he didn't deliver than to where he did.

The pork comes from his own farm bordering the Route des Genêts in St Brelade. The land, he said, was now too small to raise all the pigs necessary to supply his business: there was not enough land for each sow and also to have a separate area for the boars. He now either gets the piglets weaned elsewhere in the Island or buys them in from the UK at the age of eight weeks; since all the rearing of the animals is done in Jersey, this qualifies for the 'Genuine Jersey' designation.

When he became a pig farmer (as a retirement job), he started by keeping Saddlebacks and then Oxford Sandy and Blacks. Then he started collecting young pigs from a free-range Somerset farm - taking a night boat to England, collecting the pigs during the day and taking the night boat back to Jersey.

Quiet a strenuous agenda, which really didn't do his health a lot of good.

His stock at the moment is a mixture of Oxford Sandy and Blacks together with the American Duroc breed ('a beefy little animal - or should that be porky little animal?') which are mild tempered and grow quickly. He has now mixed up the breeds since there is no benefit to be gained from keeping the breeding separate.

At present, he keeps about 80 pigs - or at least enough for a six month supply. They are fattened for five months before they take their trip on the La Collette express.

Jon said he quite understood that people might find the 'juxtaposition of pig with pork' something cruel - or at least, distasteful.

He said: 'I often sell from my mobile shop on the main road that runs past the pig enclosure. Some people think it cruel that I should be selling pork right next to grazing pigs.

> **“Customers do tell me, for example, when they try our bacon, that they notice that the rashers stay the same size, you don’t get a frying pan full of water, and that furthermore it actually has some taste!**

I have to tell them that the pigs don’t actually understand, believe it or not, what’s happening on the other side of the fence from their field!

‘And I suggest that perhaps buying pre-packed parcels of pork from the supermarket is actually the unnatural purchase option.

At least my customers know that the pork they buy from me is from animals that have had a good, stress-free life, been well fed and lived in a natural, free-range way.

‘Can they say the same about imported cheap cuts of pork, or processed pork products they buy in supermarkets?’

He added: ‘It is possible to utilise practically everything from a pig in one way or another. But as the public taste is for lean “joints”, there is an enormous lot of the carcass that just gets chucked away in commercial pork production. You could almost feed the world with all the trotters that get sent for disposal - what a waste!

‘If we can educate a few people into how to utilise a pig’s carcass properly, so as to avoid such a profligate waste of asset, then so much a better.

‘Customers do tell me, for example, when they try our bacon, that they notice that the rashers stay the same size, you don’t get a frying pan full of water, and that furthermore it actually has some taste!

Jon has had many successful jobs in his life: working in a building society, candle making, making wedding videos; more latterly he was the States Loans officer at Housing.

> **“I say to him: “If you retire, what would you do?” He always replies: “I’d find something else to do.” Yes, he would, and then he’d go and make a success of that as well. He always has to have a purpose**

“Some people think it cruel that I should be selling pork right next to grazing pigs. I have to tell them that the pigs don’t actually understand, believe it or not, what’s happening on the other side of the fence from their field!

Then he set up his own company of mortgage brokers before ‘retiring’ to be a dairy farmer and now a pig farmer with an ever expanding business - it can capitalise on the interest in ‘local produce’ and ‘localism’ that have now come to the fore.

The figures speak for themselves: Since starting the business in 12 years ago, annual turnover has risen from £20,000 to £200,000. ‘Not bad for a tiny part-time job,’ he said, stressing the figures were turnover, not profit.

He has been known recently to talk about retiring... was that a consideration at the moment?

A giggle came from nearby where his wife, Jenny, was sitting.

‘He keeps on saying that,’ she said. ‘I say to him: “If you retire, what would you do?” He always replies: “I’d find something else to do.” Yes, he would, and then he’d go and make a success of that as well. He always has to have a purpose.’

The bull in the kitchen... and other stories

Bevis the Butchers - the shop on Snow Hill - was a well-known butchers shop for decades. Now it is just a memory of how both times and tastes change. Alasdair Crosby met Richard Bevis, butcher *(retired)*

The table at the home shared by Richard Bevis and his wife is covered with old photos, a chronicle in pictures of a lifetime's career. Now about to be 79, he is in happy retirement.

With Christmas on the horizon at the time of writing, Richard was showing pictures of his family shop on the Colomberie side of Snow Hill, including those taken one December: the walls festooned with turkeys and geese, ready for Islanders' Christmas dinners.

'One year, it may have been 1994 or 1995, we had a competition: How many birds were hanging up in the shop? Whoever won had a turkey to give to any charity that they wanted. People stood there for hours, counting. Only one person got near the right number. He said '606'. Wrong - it was 607. There was one hanging behind the door, which he couldn't see.'

In these modern times, the seemingly invincible army of vegetarians seems to carry all before it. But at this season of goodwill to all, let us remember that mankind was born omnivorous, even if nowadays an appetite for meat is a love that dares not speak its name.

Times have certainly changed: a Jersey trades directory of pre-war years lists 61 butchers in town - 27 of them in the Central market.

'Every one of them would have made at least an adequate living,' he said, 'and the trade was respected, just as were all the other family-owned retail trades that provided a useful service for local families: fishmongers, florists or cobblers, or the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker. How could someone make a good living in that way these days?'

Richard's father, Bernard, was a butcher, working at Jocelyn's butcher's stall in the market. He had started aged around 13 in 1926; in due course the butchers moved from there to their own shop on the corner of Bath Street and Minden Place - the building where Mino's restaurant is now located - it was the first curved glass shop window in Jersey. His father became the manager and ran it until the turn of 1951-1952, when he left to start his own butcher' shop.

The building where the new shop was on Snow Hill had been built in the 1850s as a wine merchants, with cellars underneath. More recently it had been a butchers, run by Chris Taylor (no relation to the St John Constable as far as is known), who loved fishing - preferred it, in fact, to working in the shop. He would only open the shop according to the state of the tides and in the end sold his business so he could spend more time fishing - and that was the genesis of Bevis the Butchers.

The first day of trading under new the ownership was New Year's Eve 1951; total takings for the day: £12.

> **"No such thing as a 40-hr week either,' he recalled, 'not when you worked for your father! At busy times we worked from 4 in the morning until 10 at night. I didn't really want to be a butcher - I wanted to be in the Fleet Air Arm**

Those were the days of post-war meat rationing, and customers had to be registered with a butcher - it they were registered with Bevis, they could not be served at Till's, for example if they went there, as that butcher had not been allocated rations for that customer. Meat came off ration in July 1954: 'We dealt only with Commonwealth countries in those days, and did so until 1972 when Britain shrugged off its Commonwealth supplies, such as New Zealand lamb. Nowadays trading with Commonwealth might take off again!'

Richard started working in the shop at around the age of 9, after school and on Saturdays. He was paid 7/6d as a Saturday boy; when he worked full-time he was paid £1-10-6 a week (the 6d was for his social security stamp). Things improved when he was married to Jean, his wife, in 1963: £10 a week.

'No such thing as a 40-hr week either,' he recalled, 'not when you worked for your father! At busy times we worked from 4 in the morning until 10 at night. I didn't really want to be a butcher - I wanted to be in the Fleet Air Arm.'

> **"I was with a farmer and my father, looking at this bull. The bull decided he didn't like us. He pulled out his peg and charged towards us. The three of us ran down the road - the farmer was in his 60s - the bull in hot pursuit. We ran inside the farmhouse - the bull followed us**

Turkeys originally came from Whitely's turkey farm near Queen's Valley and were sold at 5 shillings a lb. Beef was often from Jersey cows or barren heifers - and inspecting potential joints on the hoof were part of the job: jacket and tie donned for the important occasion of meeting a farmer.

'There was no written contract when we bought an animal; it was very much the case of "my word is my bond".'

The excursions to the country had its moments: 'I was with a farmer and my father, looking at this bull. The bull decided he didn't like us. He pulled out his peg and charged towards us. The three of us ran down the road - the farmer was in his 60s - the bull in hot pursuit. We ran inside the farmhouse - the bull followed us.

'The farmer's wife was in the kitchen - she was a big lady and had to turn sideways to get through the door. She just looked at the bull and gave it a back hander. The bull looked... well... sheepish, and quickly backed out of the house.

'The thing about Jersey bulls - they have too much strength and not enough intelligence. But the cows are lovely.'

The word 'butcher' in its modern usage, is a misnomer, since butchering an animal means slaughtering and cutting it up. A more exact name for the modern butcher would be 'meat purveyor', since none of them - or at least very few of them - are likely to have had much experience in cutting up carcasses.

A business meeting on the farm.

Happy Christmas!

> **“When I started at the shop, I would never sell any meat from an animal under three years old. If you want quality, you need to feed it grass and wait for it to grow naturally, not force feed it with chemical growth additives**

A familiarity with slaughtering - the obvious prior necessity of eating meat - by no means led to cruelty or indifference to animal suffering.

At one time in the early 1960s he was so disgusted by the low standards at the abattoir (now the ‘Liberty Wharf’ building) that he led a campaign against it, taken up by the Evening Post), which resulted in it being shut down temporarily.

At a later stage in his career he gave butchery classes at Highlands to restaurant chefs and apprentice butchers, teaching them how to bone out meat properly: ‘not much of a carcass need be wasted, if you know what to do with it.’

Tastes have changed dramatically since the 1950s, of course, but not necessarily for the better. Too much meat comes from too young animals: ‘When I started at the shop, I would never sell any meat from an animal under three years old. If you want quality, you need to feed it grass and wait for it to grow naturally, not force feed it with chemical growth additives.’

He very much approves of the Jersey-Angus cross, which has great quality potential, although using other large breeds is unfair and cruel on the Jersey cow, ‘a little doll’ of an animal.

‘Don’t put a cross-bred animal straight out to grass,’ he said. ‘You’ve got to milk-feed it first, to give it the bone structure. Then, when it gets out to grass, it puts on the necessary muscle weight.’

He added: ‘We could do so much more to provide local beef in Jersey if we wanted to - although we’d never be self-sufficient. Beef production was started because every cow needs to have a calf once a year. Only 25% of the calves born are needed for herd replacement. So what do you do with the other 75%?

‘We’ve got the land; we’ve got the space... But don’t give it over to sheep! You can’t have commercial lamb production in Jersey.

Sheep are just as smallholder's hobby, good for keeping down the stinging nettles and gorse and being a mobile lawn mower. And they ruin the grass for cattle.'

Evidently he does not have a lot of time for sheep.

He repeated: 'I'd love to see a lot more done with the raw beef material we've got here. We could do better than knocking them on the head and sending them to the Zoo or incinerating them. So much better to make them into a valuable product for export or consumption. We are a very affluent Island and the majority of what we eat is the hindquarter portions - steaks etc. We seldom use a lot of the forequarters - and there could be a big export market for that once Brexit is solved.'

Tea times

There are now four places in Jersey where tea plants are grown. Ian Macdonald, former tea planter in what was then called Ceylon, is an advisor to Jersey's tea growers

Standing in the middle of the area of Warwick Farm that has become a micro tea plantation, Ian Macdonald was demonstrating how tea pickers would harvest plants in the famous tea-growing areas of the world:

'They are looking for a perfect formation of two leaves and a bud. They snap off very quickly and easily and are ideal for tea pickers, who then take the basket to the factory and drop it on an area where the tea leaves will wither - in a loft, for example, where it will dry in the natural air, or a bed of hessian or wire mesh if you're producing on a small scale. The air will circulate around the leaves and they will change in due course from a lovely crisp texture to something more like soggy lettuce, losing 30% of its moisture content.

'If you're making black tea, you let them ferment for a bit. Finally you fire them in an oven, which turns the leaves from a golden green-brown copper colour to produce the black tea leaves you find in tea bags or strain as you pour from a teapot.'

He continued: 'The amazing thing about all these Jersey-grown teas is the quite exceptional quality. Tea grows like wine: if it grows with difficulty, slowly, like in Darjeeling for example, you get the finest taste and beautiful flavours and aromas.'

It has been a good season for the small areas of Jersey on which tea is now being grown. There is the Warwick Farm area, owned and managed by the Boucher and Le Pastourel families, where the production is completely 'organic', as opposed to the other patches of land, that are used by the Jersey Royal Company for growing tea. Ian said Jersey Royal had decided to go 'mainstream' for a few years while the bushes were establishing themselves and then take a decision on whether organic was the way forward.

They have patches of tea-growing on slopes near Gorey, in a former potato field; another area near Bouley Bay and a third area in the little valley below Hamptonne in St Lawrence.

None of the production is really commercial as yet: Jersey Royal has a small trial 'factory' and are making samples of the product.

Ian said the quality of both producers was excellent, but to become commercially viable, the bushes, which are three to four years old, have to grow and mature for ten years in order for the producers see a return on their investment and for the volume of the harvest to sustain production.

Ian has had a life 'in tea', going out to Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then called) in 1957 as an 18-year-old - it took him three weeks by boat to reach there.

His family had tea planting connections, so he was able to get a job as a trainee manager on a big estate up in the Hills (where the top quality tea was grown). He worked there for ten years.

'It was a lovely way of life in a stunningly beautiful area. It was very much the old colonial life; as an 18-year-old I had four servants: gardener, cook, cleaner and messenger boy. Many of the managers (although not all) were Europeans. Life revolved around 'the club' and tennis parties - it was very much part of the 'Somerset Maugham' era. I was part of Ceylon's rugby team, so I had a brilliant social and sporting life.

'But political and civil disruption came to Ceylon in the form of the socialist and anti-colonial reforms of the prime minister, Mrs Bandaranaike, which reduced the efficiency of the tea trade and ruined the burgeoning tourism. Over ten years, all the Europeans left. The tea plantations were nationalised. '

During his time there he had met and married a girl from Jersey and had two small daughters by the time he realised it was impossible to stay on. He came to Jersey with his family and was due to get another planting assignment in Assam, before another war going on between India and China made moving there impossible.

"The amazing thing about all these Jersey-grown teas is the quite exceptional quality. Tea grows like wine: if it grows with difficulty, slowly, like in Darjeeling for example, you get the finest taste and beautiful flavours and aromas

However, he discovered the existence of the Overseas Trading Corporation ('OTC') in Jersey - importing bulk tea, packaging it and re-exporting it - then a major Jersey company employing about 350 people.

He went round to its premises in First Tower one day to introduce himself and was promptly offered a job, so he stayed in Jersey.

The location of the old OTC is marked by the old ornate main gates facing the Inner Road at First Tower - now a part of First Tower School. The 'Sun Works Bowling Club' was a major sporting club in the Island.

Its existence in Jersey was due to the fact that originally there was a Stamp duty in mainland Britain on bulk tea imports, which did not apply to Jersey. So, as Ian described it, because of 'a good old Jersey fiddle', tea in bulk could be imported into Jersey and then re-exported without paying the duty.

'We were exporting tea over the world from Jersey,' he said, 'but freight costs became so prohibitive that there was very little reason for the OTC to continue to exist in the Island.'

After OTC he worked as an independent tea trader and since retirement Ian has worked part-time for Jersey Heritage. He now brings his tea-growing experience to helping the development of Jersey's own production.

'This is a lovely new interest for me over the past few years,' he said. 'It's like going back to work again. Jersey has a few years to go before Jersey tea can be truly commercial, but it's a great way for Jersey to diversify, as is hemp as well. I am not involved financially in any way with the producers, but I would do everything possible to encourage the further development of Jersey tea.'

The perfect leaf formation for picking

Christmas with covid

Could the local hospitality industry help save our Christmas festive cheer? Kieranne Grimshaw spoke to a number of hotels to find out how they have fared in the pandemic and how they have had to adjust any plans for Christmas and New Year

With such a fast changing situation, plans may change - but at the time of going to print:

At the **St Brelade's Bay Hotel**, the team are aiming to keep everything as normal as possible. General Manager Thomas Stene, explained: 'We're allowed to have a Christmas Day lunch with tables one metre apart, all according to regulations. Parties over 40 aren't permitted, so that includes all corporates and the big parish outings at Christmas.' On Christmas Day, Thomas confirmed they can still have 130 for lunch - the norm is 180 - and keep enough distance between tables.

New Year's plans present more of a challenge. Some locals may be familiar with the annual Gala Dinner, where people take the somewhat rare opportunity to really dress up and celebrate the occasion. 'We are taking bookings, but it's a bit of a grey area at the moment,' Thomas said. 'We aren't allowed any dancing or the normal piped music, but at least we can have some piano and guitar - it will just be different.'

The pandemic has also impacted on staff. 'We have the same staff as they can't go home unless they quarantine' said Thomas. We'd also like to keep them as we'll need them for next season. Some do go home, but intend to return.'

Thomas Stene at St Brelade's Bay Hotel.

> **"We aren't allowed any dancing or the normal piped music, but at least we can have some piano and guitar - it will just be different**

The main challenge is the uncertainty about the future. "We don't know which guidelines will come in and it was a big shock that the UK put so many regions in a Red Zone - where most of our guests normally come from. It's difficult to plan.'

The States track and trace initiative has enabled the hotel to remain open and Thomas and his team will be checking the news for any new regulations. Christmas at the hotel is planned to go ahead - albeit with a difference!

The Atlantic Hotel is also going ahead with its festive plans. Despite the Covid restrictions, most things will remain the same. For those who want to get away, albeit in the Island, the Atlantic is offering a three-night luxury escape over the Christmas period.

Owner and managing director Patrick Burke confirmed that their New Year's Eve may be a little more sedate with no 'dancing the night away' due to Covid restrictions, but they aim to set the scene for an equally enjoyable evening and five course dinner. They hope their exclusive house party atmosphere will see in the New Year in style.

“New Year's Eve may be a little more sedate with no 'dancing the night away' due to Covid restrictions, but they aim to set the scene for an equally enjoyable evening and five course dinner

The Hotel Savoy is equally very keen to offer as normal a festive programme as possible. General Manager Robert Mitache said they had to adapt by keeping in mind Covid regulations and advice, with masks being worn by staff and track-and-trace in place. Staff were flexible too, with some changing roles from housekeeping to helping in the kitchen.

'For Christmas Day, we'll now be focusing on a meal,' Robert said.

> **"I think Christmas Day lunch will feel more like a celebration, similar to Thanksgiving' he continued. 'People might just be grateful they can go out to eat**

Robert Mitachi at the Savoy Hotel.

'It's a shame, but we'll still have some live back ground music, all subject to regulations, away from the diners. They'll be no dancing - as for hugging?' Bookings have been full since mid-September. Their maximum capacity has now reduced to 80 from 120.

For New Year Robert remembers their last few years of amazing parties and Venetian balls. 'We can now kiss goodbye to 2020,' he said. 'That will be our theme for this year.' New Year will be a meal and plenty of decorations in the room with some background music.

'I think Christmas Day lunch will feel more like a celebration, similar to Thanksgiving' he continued. 'People might just be grateful they can go out to eat. New Year may be different, more of a party atmosphere, so we'll have to be careful. It will be more of a challenge.'

Robert recognises the invaluable support of the Jersey Hospitality Association (JHA): 'Chief Executive Officer Simon Soar has been an excellent point of contact during Covid 19 and the Association has taken on board many of our suggestions.'

The hotel has been able to continue through this support via webinars and courses for staff organised by the JHA.

The main challenge for Robert and the industry is the uncertainty: 'It's the unknown; we just don't know what's going on, we have to guess. I think the track and trace initiative has done a good job. It's allowed hotels to stay open and also for patrons not to have to wear masks.

> **"We can now kiss goodbye to 2020,' he said. 'That will be our theme for this year**

'We are lucky compared with elsewhere in world. Instead of having to stay home alone with the TV, people can still go out for a nice meal and celebrate being with others over the Christmas period.'

Festivities may be different this year, but that could be their attraction.

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In the kitchen

Improving a digital Christmas: festive recipes from our cookery writer, Zoë Garner

It's Christmasssssssssss... well not quite but almost, and the sounds of the Christmas classics are very much welcomed in our household. There are so many joys that this season normally brings but naturally the food is one of my main focuses and this year perhaps this joy will dispel some of the covid gloom. Here are some of my favourite winter staples that are always a hit around Christmas time. Enjoy!

Celeriac, Hazelnut & Truffle Soup

Serves 4

1tbsp oil
2 shallots, finely chopped
2 celery sticks, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small celeriac, approx 600g, peeled and chopped
1 bay leaf
1tbsp fresh thyme leaves
1litre vegetable stock
2tbsp crème fraîche
1tbsp truffle oil, plus extra to serve, optional

1 In a large saucepan, heat the oil over a low heat. Add the shallots and celery and fry for 4min. Add the garlic and cook for a further 1min.

2 Add the celeriac, bay and thyme and season well. Pour in the stock, bring to the boil, then simmer for around 30min.

3 Take out the bay leaf and add the creme fraiche. Remove from the heat and blend with a stick blender until smooth. Stir through the truffle oil, only adding half first and check to taste as the strength of the oils vary. Season if needed, ladle into bowls and add an extra drizzle of truffle oil.

Christmas Brownies

Makes 25, bite sized

175g unsalted butter
135g dark chocolate, roughly chopped
11/2tbsp brandy, optional
250g light brown soft sugar
2 medium eggs
100g plain flour
1tsp ground cinnamon
1tsp mixed spice
100g sultanas
white chocolate, melted
sprinkles, to decorate

1 Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan). Line a 8in square tine with baking parchment. In a large pan gently heat the butter, chocolate and brandy until melted.

2 Remove the pan from the heat and mix in the sugar, followed by the eggs and mix until smooth. Sift over the flour and spices and add the sultans, string everything together. Tip the mixture into the tin and bake for 30min.

3 Once cool, cut into squares. Drizzle with the melted chocolate and decorate with sprinkles. Leave to set before serving. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Zoë's Tip: *Make ahead and store the whole brownie, wrapped in clingfilm for up to a week. Once cut the bites are best eaten within a few days.*

Giant Cous Cous Salad with Cumin Roasted Butternut Squash

Serves 4 as a main, or 6/8 as a side

1 small butternut squash, approx 350g, peeled and cubed
1tbsp olive oil
2tbsp cumin seeds
250g giant wholewheat cous cows
120g dried cranberries
200g pomegranate seeds
100g blanched almonds, toasted and halved
small bunch of freshly chopped parsley
1 red onion, diced
200g fetta, crumbled

Dressing:
zest & juice of 2 clementines
3tbsp honey
4tbsp apple cider vinegar
4tbsp olive oil

Zoë's Tip: *I love making this winter salad ahead of time, but don't add the dressing until the last minute. It's an ideal Boxing Day side with the leftover turkey.*

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan) and line a baking tray with parchment. Put the squash on the baking tray and drizzle over the olive oil, sprinkle over the cumin seeds and season. Mix well until evenly coated. Roast for 30min then remove from the oven and leave to cool.

2 Meanwhile, bring a large pan of water to the boil. Rinse the dry cous cous and then add to the water and cook for 6min. Strain and rinse with cold water.

3 Put the cranberries, pomegranate, hazelnuts, parsley, onion and cous cous in a large bowl and mix well. Make the dressing by combining all the ingredients in a bowl and season to taste. Add the cooked squash and gently mix all the ingredients together. Pour over the dressing and crumble over the feta and serve.

Wine is fine - and we made it to christmas!

Image: La Mare Wine Estate

By James Bridges, Director, Martel Maides Auctions

I'm happy to predict the fine wine market for 2021 - but for us all, merely surviving a year like 2020 is a matter for celebration.

More than ever before we feel that our Fine Wine Auction at Martel Maides on 14th December should be about pleasure rather than speculation.

I have long known a group of friends who formed an informal wine syndicate. They take turns to buy mixed lots of fine wine at regional auctions and then get together to pop corks. There are no rules but enjoyment and conviviality, and by pooling costs they can open some big names without fear of reproach.

In the world of fine wine, the much-feared collapse in values didn't materialise despite all indications to the contrary - and that was before COVID.

Think about it. Trump slapped a 25% tariff on all European wine except Italy in October 2019. Hong Kong was already in uproar and Britain had already stumbled around for three years in a BREXIT half-light with a severely eroding currency. The three main engines of the global fine wine trade all running on fumes.

Had I written this a year ago I would have said to fine wine investors: sit on your hands and hold your breath.

Then came COVID, but the collapse was in equities, not wine.

In the teeth of a major global disaster, wine proved itself in its primary financial role as a tax-efficient hedge, fundamentally uncorrelated to stock markets. If anything, this has put wind in its sails as 2020 turns into 2021, and at the top end some wines have galloped upwards.

In October, 12 bottles of Clos de la Roche from Domaine Dujac 1990 achieve £58,800, while it's only a few months back that 12 bottles of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 1988 fetched £232,750, an indication of the strength of the Burgundy market in particular.

Most auctioneers are noting increased registrants and bidders, and at year end the investment wine market is unmistakably buoyant.

The fundamental driver of treasure assets, from Fine Art to Ferraris, is the state of everything else considered 'conventionally safe', and in no point in my life as an auctioneer has 'everything else' looked worse than now.

Bank interest is at rock bottom. Bond yields have turned negative, while equity markets are haunted by extreme crash anxiety as income yields have collapsed too.

In this context viewing wine as 'risky' or 'exotic' seems antiquated. It's been anything but.

That's not to say that fine wine was unaffected by COVID, but the way in which it was affected did accentuate trends already well under way.

> **"Whether in Jersey or Guernsey choosing wine for investment, or the festive season should be a pleasure, an opportunity to indulge your knowledge as well as your taste buds**

A great example is the Bordeaux 2019 en primeur campaign. It came at the wrong moment in the spring, forcing discounts. Properties like Palmer and Pontet Canet reduced prices by 30%.

We have seen the rapid rise of Italy in 2020 (Italy was spared the tariff), but once again this trend was already underway, with Barolo and Barbaresco rising sharply, some super-Tuscans performing superbly and excitement around Piedmont.

But this is mirrored by rising Rioja names in Spain, the Rhone Valley and California growing in stature as well, alongside champagne and selective German properties. Similarly, whisky is going like the clappers.

All these developments represent the broadening and deepening of the secondary market by territory and by category, and it's no great prediction to say that this will continue in 2021 and beyond.

Whether in Jersey or Guernsey choosing wine for investment, or the festive season should be a pleasure, an opportunity to indulge your knowledge as well as your taste buds. The 14th December Fine Wine Auction will be live online, allowing you to treat yourself, and possibly others, from the comfort of your own home, mask free.

For now, do as I will: reduce your horizons to Christmas, bid on a lucky dip mixed lot in the happy value valley between posh drinkers and bona fide investments, and settle in for a quietly enjoyable festive season.

James Bridges is Director of Martel Maides Auctions in Guernsey.

Jonathan Voak, the Jersey representative of Martel Maides Auctions, is now sourcing fine wines, ports and spirits and good quality pictures, antiques and jewellery for their auctions during 2021.

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Tasty rainbow challenge

Melody Evans, a naturopathic nutritionist, helps busy people who are feeling stressed, tired, anxious and overwhelmed, to rediscover the spring in their step. She does this by providing them with an easy and manageable eating and lifestyle plan so that they can increase their energy levels, have improved clarity and focus and feel and look their best

I decided to start the Tasty Rainbow Challenge as a way of inspiring parents with creative and tasty ways to get their children to eat more vegetables. Having grown up in the era of the pressure cooker, I remember all too well the soggy broccoli that my mum used to dish up (sorry mum!) and how unappealing this would taste!

There are several reasons why vegetables are so good for us:

- Eating a variety of 40 different vegetables, fruits and herbs over the course of the week helps to maintain the diversity of the good bacteria in your gut and the more diverse your bacteria means a stronger immune system and better health!
- A fibre-rich diet helps to feed the good gut bacteria; vegetables are especially rich in fibre. In fact, the friendly bacteria love to eat vegetables, garlic, onions, fruits, beans, lentils nuts and seeds.

You may not be aware that 80% of your immune system resides in your gastrointestinal tract.

The bacteria here communicates with your immune system making sure that it protects you against disease-causing microbes, that it tolerates harmless microbes and also that it does not attack your own cells as in auto-immunity. These good bacteria are also involved in regulating inflammation, serotonin production (your feel-good chemical) and regulating cholesterol and blood pressure, so it makes sense to support the integrity of the gut microbiome.

I am a keen advocate of preventative health. I believe that we have all been gifted with this wonderful life, and taking our health into our own hands empowers us to make choices every day to prevent many of the avoidable chronic diseases that are on the increase in our modern world.

Why is this so important in this context? Well, there is a rising epidemic of asthma, diabetes, allergies and obesity which have been steadily increasing over the past few decades, with the World Health Organisation ('WHO') declaring that chronic diseases accounted for 60% of all deaths globally (and this is set to rise).

The reason for these chronic diseases has been identified by WHO as four modifiable risk factors: tobacco use, alcohol misuse, unhealthy diet and excessive calorie intake, and physical inactivity.

There is also a suspected prevalence of undiagnosed non-alcoholic fatty liver disease in children who are overweight, which leads to health implications such as liver scarring, diabetes, high blood pressure and kidney disease.

I believe that by introducing healthy eating and lifestyle habits now, we can make a difference for this generation of children, helping to slow down and reverse this upward trend of chronic illnesses.

The first 1,000 days of a child's life have been recognised by science as one of the most critical phases of development, starting from the moment of conception, through 270 days in pregnancy and completing upon the child's second birthday. It is estimated that 75% of the human brain develops in this stage and around 50% of a child's energy goes towards that brain development, so promoting optimal gut health at this time is key to being able to absorb and utilise the nutrients needed to support this development.

With winter now setting in, and the topic of how to strengthen your immune system on everyone's lips, I feel this is a good time to launch this challenge. I have set up an Instagram account called Tasty Rainbow Challenge, and you can also join her Facebook group under the same name. I have also prepared a free downloadable chart, which you can pin to your fridge to open your children's curiosity when it comes to trying different foods and make this a fun, challenging game.

*You can request one at mel@melodyevansnutrition.com

Melody would also love it if you could post your colourful creations with the hashtag **#tastyrainbowchallenge**.

THIS WINTER, WITH RUBIS...

TOP 5 HOME HEATING TIPS

1. Make sure your heating system is in tip top condition
2. Bleed your radiators & enjoy optimum heat this winter
3. Reduce your thermostat & save on your heating bill
4. Check the condition of your oil tank before winter
5. Avoid running out of oil & sign up for planned delivery

IN THE COMMUNITY: HELPING TO COMBAT FUEL POVERTY

In these extraordinary times, this winter many Islanders will be facing hardship and in need of assistance to meet their winter fuel costs. To help, Rubis are donating £20,000 in heating oil vouchers to those who are struggling across Jersey and Guernsey.

Managing Director of Rubis, Bertrand Dellinger commented: 'Islanders have felt the sting of COVID-19 on their mental, physical, and financial wellbeing. For some, it has had a greater impact leaving islanders struggling and we want to help. We hope these vouchers will support our local community during this difficult time.'

Each voucher is worth £100, and these will be distributed by the Salvation Army in Jersey and the Guernsey Welfare Service from Monday 19th October.

Richard Nunn from the Salvation Army in Jersey said, 'We are incredibly grateful for Rubis' support in providing these winter heating oil vouchers. This year has been difficult for many islanders and these vouchers will provide a much-needed helping hand.'

Those who need help this winter are invited to visit the charities to collect a voucher, before contacting the Rubis team to redeem it and arrange their order of heating oil.

Have you ever wondered what happens to used coffee grounds? They often end up in landfill where they degrade and emit harmful greenhouse gases. Unless they're recycled. Coffee Logs are eco-friendly fire logs made from recycled coffee grounds, without the classic coffee smell.

At Rubis, we take our responsibilities towards the environment very seriously and are continuously seeking out new fuels that are more efficient and better for the environment. This is why we're excited to announce our partnership with Coffee Logs, just in time for winter.

Collecting used grounds from a wide range of businesses in the UK – including universities, instant coffee factories, coffee shops, airports and railway stations – Coffee Logs recycles these, harnessing the untapped energy left behind, to create a green energy source. This process also reduces emissions, caused by coffee grounds left in landfill, by 80%.

Each log contains grounds from 25 cups of coffee, that quickly adds up to 400 cups per bag.

Coffee Logs are ideal for use in wood burners and multi-fuel stoves, burning 20% hotter and longer than kiln-dried wood.

So, snuggle up sustainably this winter with Coffee Logs.

Now available to purchase from Rubis at La Collette.

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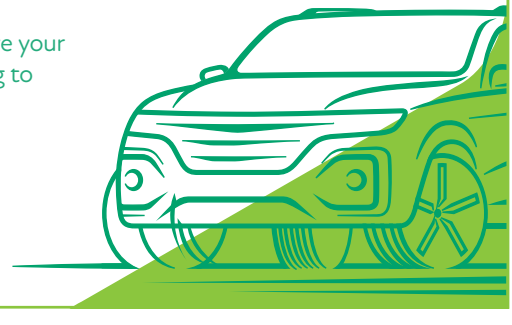

RD100 DRIVE GREEN

We've launched an advanced biofuel – RD100. This 100% Renewable Diesel is an immediate solution to help our local communities reduce global carbon emissions.

RD100 is clear, odourless and is refined from 100% renewable sources offering better combustion. Compatible with existing diesel engines, there is no need for vehicle modifications. RD100 can replace regular fossil diesel today.

An ongoing problem for local motorists with diesel engines is the maintenance of their diesel particulate filters (DPF). These filters, that were a step to reduce emissions effectively, have proved costly in the Channel Islands as journeys are shorter and engines are often unable to reach and maintain their optimum temperate for the filters to work effectively. Instead, due to the nature of local car journeys, the filters require regular cleaning and/or replacing.

Renewable diesel promises to assist in this ongoing maintenance and reduce costs, prolonging the use of the diesel particulate filter and improving fuel consumption due to the fuel's clean properties. Its cold-start properties also make RD100 the perfect fuel for the cold winter months.

Improve your carbon footprint and make the switch. You can fuel up with RD100 at Sion Garage and Falles Airport Garage.

Meet the carbon farmer

Caroline Spencer talked to Glyn Mitchell about regenerative farming

It sounds so obvious, so simple. You take food waste, you make compost from it instead of burning it, you regenerate the soil to grow healthier food, fibre and fuel. It closes the loop, completes the circle.

As a Soil Food Web microbiologist, Glyn Mitchell knows that while it certainly all makes sense, it is a lot more complicated than it sounds. He is someone who knows about cultivating microbes, fungi and bacteria in the right proportions in order to come out with a 'biologically complete' compost.

At Warwick Farm, he works with Jersey Hemp and their fully owned subsidiary The Carbon Farm. At the time of visiting him, road sweepings from St Lawrence had just arrived in a large parish vehicle.

'We compost plant material, fix it and put it back in the ground. I farm carbon,' Glyn explained. 'Those road sweepings would otherwise be taken to the incinerator, which would release CO2 into the atmosphere, which is bonkers.

'The trick to composting is that you've got to find all the ingredients that microbes like to eat, particularly bacteria and fungi. All I do is mix them together in the right amounts to make a nice-smelling compost ready to go out on the fields.'

Ideally Glyn wants to see such a localised composting operation for food and green waste in every parish. The Carbon Farm are soon to take delivery of an aerobic digester that would accept food waste from restaurants and cafes, and 24 hours later it comes out as a pasteurised compost ingredient.

Visitors to the 2019 Boat Show will have seen this demonstrated in the eco zone of the event. Now Glyn wants to upscale the model. 'The idea is that people can offset their emissions by choosing a restaurant who send their food waste to us and composting that waste to feed Jersey soil. Soil carbon levels have been depreciating dramatically because of how much we have taken from the soil to grow crops and don't give back. They used to be up to 15-20%, they are currently around 3%.'

Walking around the tunnels at Jersey Hemp, Glyn points out that nothing could be grown here for 15 years because of the poor soil. But now it is yielding healthy hemp crops.

It is estimated that in Jersey 14,000 tonnes of food waste goes to the incinerator every year. Glyn thinks the real figure could be a lot higher.

'When we were collecting from Nude Food, the first restaurant that sent its food waste for composting, I was collecting 100 kilos a week, and that was just one small outlet. I hope to engage with everyone, including supermarkets, as it doesn't make sense to burn inedible food waste, when it's a natural fertiliser.'

He also wants to engage with anyone interested in the land. 'Our main focus is to make Jersey as resilient to climate change as possible and the best way of doing that is to improve the soil,' he said. 'Retain the topsoil and you have improved food security, water security, bio security.

It's a much bigger picture that we have got to get our heads around. We can't keep depleting our soil.

'Mother Nature's law of return is very simple. You leave 60% for her and you take 40%. It's about farming with Mother Nature, not against it. Here at Jersey Hemp, the philosophy is that you return what you take. Jersey Hemp, by using this organic regenerative system, are committed to leaving a proportion of their crop residue to rebuild the soil.'

It's early days for The Carbon Farm, which was formed in April, and Glyn and colleague Chris O'Brien have been establishing priorities. Over the summer, they concentrated on finding people who would deliver clean organic matter. The compost, from drop-off to product, takes about three months to make and now they are in a position to take it to the next level, getting composting machines in every parish and supporting Jersey farmers to regenerative farming.

However, the compost can't be offered to external parties until they get a licence, currently under consideration by the Government of Jersey.

> "Everything points to regenerating Jersey's soils for our children's future

Businesses, Glyn says, need to consider putting something back into the environment, and composting food waste is one way of doing that.

Of course, converting to regenerative farming doesn't come cheap, and can take two or three years to make the transition. 'It is not easy, but it is achievable,' he said. 'To be adopted on an Island-wide scale, farmers will require encouragement, patience and possibly financial incentives to give them the time and security to learn and practise regenerative techniques. Higher education will also need to evolve to include soil conservation practices in curriculums.

'Everything points to regenerating Jersey's soils for our children's future,' Glyn said. 'I believe there are many individuals and businesses who want to do it and hopefully Carbon Farm can provide a direction.'

Closing the loop with compostable packaging

By Caroline Spencer

We may have all got behind the cause to reuse plastic bags in the supermarket but Karen Gray wants us to go further. She wants to replace all bags, takeaway containers and cutlery with compostable alternatives.

Karen's inspiration goes back to childhood. Growing up in Durban in South Africa, she saw how her father, disabled by polio as a child, could make money from waste.

> **"I started to research alternative products that are earth friendly and found products made from plants, from regular crops such as corn and sugar cane that are renewable and low-carbon. I collected samples from across the world**

'Every Saturday he would buy at auctions, fix things and re-sell them,' she said. 'Making something out of a waste product was enough to keep our family safe and healthy and to send us to school. And he used to collect waste from mushroom farms and make it into compost. I didn't know what it was called then but I now know it as 'closing the loop.

Unlike the traditional linear economic model of 'take-make-consumer-throw away', a circular 'closed loop' economy is where products get collected, re-purposed and re-used. A compostable closed loop would see compostable bags and containers combined with food waste and other green waste being made into compost, put back onto the soil, adding nutrients to grow more crops.

More recently, Karen was becoming increasingly aware of the world's problem with plastic pollution and was moved to take action after watching Blue Planet.

'I started to research alternative products that are earth friendly and found products made from plants, from regular crops such as corn and sugar cane that are renewable and low-carbon. I collected samples from across the world,' she said.

In 2018 Karen founded Green on Purpose, a company established to market eco-friendly plant-based products and she became a distributor for a UK company called Vegware. She has since sourced packaging made from mushrooms, algae, cassava, sugar cane and bamboo.

One success has been with Café Connect at Highlands College, where the students' canteen has moved over to plant-based packaging, replacing 270,000 single-use plastic takeaway containers over 12 months.

Head chef Patrick Hogge said he had taken action because he wants to do his bit for the planet for the next generation. 'When I'm not at work or with my family, I am out foraging and seeing what I can get off the land. I have three daughters, the youngest of whom is seven weeks, and I'd like something to be left for them.'

The trouble, however, is that none of the packaging waste from the canteen is actually being composted. 'It needs to be on a larger scale to achieve,' he said. 'We need all cafés to do the same.'

'Although the Government of Jersey is prioritising the environment, we are still unfortunately unable to compost the packaging locally. On the plus side, when this packaging is burned fewer toxins are released - there's no plastic, no carcinogens - and you feel a bit better that anything that doesn't make it to the bin will break down reasonably quickly.

'I like to think we are sowing the seeds for a better future for the next generation. Clearly it would be so much better if the packaging could be composted properly, but we have to start somewhere.'

> **"I like to think we are sowing the seeds for a better future for the next generation**

Karen hopes that in 2021 the canteen can start closing the loop. This means that their containers should start to be returned to compost.

'The whole idea is that we set up collection points where people can return the compostable bags, and then link in with Glyn Mitchell from The Carbon Farm for composting.

'I have found a manufacturer of compostable shopping bags, bags for life, bin bags, even dog poo bags. What I would like to do is make jute bags locally. They are eco friendly and sustainable, and better than cotton, because they are grown chemical free. Jute grows quickly and has lower impact on the environment and uses less water than cotton. And if they are made in Jersey, the aim is to make them affordable to start replacing plastic bags.

'We need one or two big retailers to make this happen. Jute bags could attract funding as we can put branding on them.

'For 2021 my vision is to have at least one closed loop programme set up - with collection services of compostable items, processing and a commercial composting site that's fully operational. The aim is for one in each parish but we need to get the pilot done next year.

'I am also planning online workshops and awareness events, as education is vital.

'This is already happening in the world. We just need to build up confidence and know that it can actually happen in Jersey. I focus on compostable bags to start, but this is moving toward all packaging becoming compostable, it's the future to reduce plastic pollution and save our planet. We can close the loop, we can do it in Jersey, and it will create jobs, be sustainable, and add to our food security.

'Three years I have been going at this, and I will keep going until people join me on this journey. Demand for more eco-friendly products is now been driven by consumers as well. Write to your Constable. Ask cafés what packaging they are using. Start using your voice. We are all in this together.'

> **"Three years I have been going at this, and I will keep going until people join me on this journey. Demand for more eco-friendly products is now been driven by consumers as well. Write to your Constable. Ask cafés what packaging they are using. Start using your voice. We are all in this together**

Beyond our 'wildest' dreams?

Could Jersey invest in a local rewilding project? Asks Mike Stentiford

A word that has now surreptitiously crept into the realms of environmental jargon is that of rewilding, nine letters that generally conjure up images of alpha wildlife species in big, wide open spaces.

It was a subject enthusiastically explored in fine detail during a recent presentation by Rob Stoneman, a special guest of The National Trust for Jersey.

As an active adviser to the Netherlands based Rewilding Europe Project, 'no wolf was left unloved' during his wide analysis of what is becoming a highly visionary subject.

According to Rob Stoneman, many countries throughout Europe are already embracing rewilding initiatives with funding secured from the EU and proactive support and encouragement arriving from individual government agencies.

While large tracts of open landscape in Europe are taking not quite the lion's share - more so the lynx's share - of rewilding success, selected parts of Britain are choosing not to be left behind.

Two of the most well established UK projects are proving highly successful, although both are quite different in content.

While the 23,000 acre Alladale Highland Estate in Scotland concentrate all efforts on reintroducing wolves and bears, the more modest 3,500 acre Knepp Estate in Sussex has lowered its sights a little by offering a much needed helping hand to more familiar but no less vulnerable species.

The rationale here is devoted to free-roaming herds of cattle, horses, pigs and deer that are collectively proving the drivers of new habitat creation.

While neither species can be regarded as having anything remotely to do with 'wild rewilding', the habitats they are creating have led to the successful return of such Red Data Book species as long-eared owls, ravens and lesser-spotted woodpeckers.

Even more important is that the estate, now known as Knepp Wildland, is providing a much needed home base for extremely rare turtle doves and purple emperor butterflies.

Further proof of successful habitat creation is that the estate now boasts 2% of the UK's entire breeding population of nightingales.

The obvious success of Knepp Wildland begs the question as to whether any similarly modest rewilding projects might be worthy of environmental support here in the Island?

We can certainly delete any unrealistic thoughts of bison, bears or wolves, but perhaps by thinking outside the box and restoring carefully selected and largely neglected landscape for the benefit of a declining biodiversity, then who knows what might be achieved?

One particular environmental 'first step' aspiration towards a local rewilding project would be to improve specific tracts of open grassland at La Mielle de Morville towards the north end of St Ouen's Bay.

This is a large open area of scrub and scattered treeline that is perfectly placed for some visionary conservation improvement.

Adding impetus to this particular concept of 'biodiversity wellbeing' is that this publicly accessible tract of land sits comfortably within the western fringe of the Jersey National Park.

As 'environmental innovation and nature conservation' are official commitments within the Park's designation, there seems no better way of both exploring and implementing the prospect of rewilding.

It's well known that Jersey's once natural habitats are falling under increasing pressure from human activity, an increasing population and island-wide building development.

While there's an increasing understanding of wildlife gardening and of urban 'rewilding' elsewhere in the world, Jersey now has a prime opportunity of some visionary environmental rewilding of its own.

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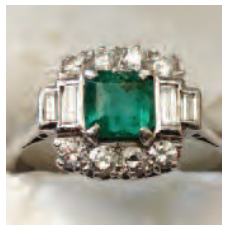

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Pruning garden plants in winter

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THE BOTANIC GARDENS at SAMARES MANOR

By our gardening writer, Gill Maccabe

Almost as soon as the clocks go back, many gardeners rush to start cutting and tidying up to prepare for the colder months. But why? Plants don't like being bare in the winter any more than we do, and neither do the hedgehogs and other winter animals that need ground cover in which to hibernate.

So, if you haven't done so already, walk around your garden and make a list of everything that can wait.

Gardening books can be very useful, however it is hard to know which gardening zone to refer to in our Island, where one minute we can be belted by 56mph salt winds and the next suffocate in tropical temperatures. So, always stick to a bit of local knowledge, which in our case is our gardener who has helped me compile this list of how to maintain and prune five of my favourite garden plants to ensure luscious growth next year, weather permitting.

Wisteria

These delicious deciduous woody stemmed twisting climbers are a feature of many south-facing Jersey granite properties, giving the houses an appealing myopic air with violet covered blooms tumbling over the window frames like giant eyelash extensions.

They can take up to seven years to flower, but if your soil is nitrogen-rich, you may find they process an excess of vegetation at the expense of flowers. Regular and timely pruning can help to increase the flowering potential of the plant. Experts at the RHS recommend pruning twice a year in July or August, and then again in January or February.

Cut back the 'whippy' green shoots of the current year's growth to five or six leaves after flowering in July or August. This controls the wisteria and prevents it getting into guttering and windows. In winter, cut back the same growth to two or three buds in January or February when the plant is dormant and leafless, this also ensures the flowers will not be obscured by the leaves.

Hydrangea

I always watch with interest the evolution of the hydrangeas in our eponymously named avenue as the pinks and blues fade to autumnal hues. This year they have been particularly beautiful in shades of rust and bronze. How I adore my mophead macrophylias. I always leave the old flower heads on over winter; pick handfuls of them for the house and for friends, where they last for weeks drying gently in a vase without water. Pruning is an important part of their care however, and come Spring I give them a ruthless chop and then cut back one or two of the oldest stems at the base to encourage the production of new replacement growth.

Nepeta Catarai *(Catmint)*

If you are lucky enough to share your life with a cat then you will be loath to prune your nepeta catarai; the temporary euphoria they get from the blooms has been likened to marijuana in adults. However, to get the lavender-like blooms to last through the spring and summer, you are going to have to prune it back sometime. Do this as soon as the flowers go totally, which could be December or even January if your garden is sheltered, then cut back into the base of the plant. Buy some Feliway spray or put dried catnip, from pet shops, in an old sock for him to play with until the purple blooms grace your borders again.

Salvias and Verbenas

The perennial salvias are very easy to look after, they are hardy but do need pruning each year. I do mine around April after the last frosts have gone and cut them back hard down to their last shooting node. You should see new shoots growing away from the base.

In a shady part of the garden, Verbena Bonariensis will carry on standing upright for months and provide winter height and colour in the garden. They suffer if you cut them back in the autumn, so cut back the old growth in the spring and watch the new shoots bounce back with increased vigour.

Roses

We have a beautiful white scented David Austen climbing rose which has been moved twice in recent years, eventually stretching its legs and settling into life against a north facing hedge.

We decided to prune it in the autumn so that the whippy shoots could be shortened before the strong winter winds blow them about and damage them. The main stems are fanned out all ready for their spring buds. Try to prune shoots by two thirds of their length and reposition any that have grown to rub against others. If an old stem has become less productive, prune it back to a healthy shoot.

Series: Secret gardens

We feature Jersey gardens that are in private ownership and not always visible to the public. In this issue, Alasdair Crosby was shown around the garden of Glanville Home, St Mark's Road, by the gardener, Hilario Goncalves

St Mark's Road is perhaps not the most obvious location for a large country garden. The front facades of the buildings facing the road present a very urban setting. One of these buildings is Glanville, a residential home for elderly ladies. Like the other buildings, it presents a pleasant - if not especially remarkable - face to the world: at some time it would have been a desirable private house; the former relatively narrow front garden facing the road is now a tarmacked area for visiting cars and delivery vehicles.

But whereas other buildings with a similar past have lost their gardens to development, Glanville Home has retained its own, hidden away to the sides and rear of the building.

"When I first came to Glanville I felt that there were many things that I would like to do differently from the previous gardener. Fortunately the Glanville Committee were very happy to listen to my ideas, and to let me make the changes

It is a reminder of the time when, for example, Joseph Clarke, patriarch of the family that owned 'Le Masurier' wine merchants and now the property company, grazed cattle in the water meadow at nearby Le Coie in what would later become the Janvrin Road, and not far away 'Val Plaisant' was not called that for nothing.

It was a warm evening in late August that I was shown around the gardens by Hilario Goncalves, the gardener. He has tended the garden at Glanville for the past six years, having worked as a gardener at various private properties since he came to Jersey in 2002.

He said: 'When I first came to Glanville I felt that there were many things that I would like to do differently from the previous gardener. Fortunately the Glanville Committee were very happy to listen to my ideas, and to let me make the changes.'

The past six years have seen a total transformation: it is now immaculate and a pleasure to view- a testimony to Hilario's hard work and loving care.

There is a flower garden, with a 'red white and blue' theme, a kitchen garden for producing vegetables for the home's residents, and fruit trees.

A sprinkler to keep the lawn's grass green and fresh was operating at the time of my visit, geraniums, lobelia and begonia flowered in their beds and roses were in bloom, flowering for a second time that season.

Among the fruit trees are apple trees (both eating and cooking varieties) and cherries. The extensive kitchen garden supplies a wide range of vegetables all the year round for the home's residents as well as soft fruit, such as strawberries and raspberries.

Over the winter months Hilario plants his Jersey Royals, ready to enjoy in the spring. Future plans include the possibility of having a roadside stall at which some of the surplus produce can be available for the wider public.

'It takes a long time to prepare the garden to the standard I want,' said Hilario. It is easy to see that, but to have a garden in such immaculate order is surely worth the effort.

The chaumontel pear and its jersey story

By Vincent Obbard of Samarès Manor

Image: Chaumontel pears growing at The Elms

Chaumontel is a small town with a Chateau just North of Paris, south of Chantilly, near Luzarches, Seine-et Oise.

This is the place which gave its name to a pear which became famous in the Channel Isles due to its wonderful taste and enormous size. It seems that it was here that they were grown bigger and better than anywhere else.

The pear was discovered by a fruit expert called, Merlet, and included in his book called *'L'Abrégé des Bons Fruits'* (1675) just at the time that Louis IV was establishing his massive 25 acre 'Potager du Roi' at Versailles, on other side of Paris, to the South West.

One could say 'Right place, right time.'

A gift of pears was a welcome gift to anyone of class with good taste. In 1760, one Nicolas de Ste Croix, in dire financial straits, asked a friend in Jersey to send a gift of Chaumontel Pears to the Earl of Liverpool, President of the Board of Trade, asking for preferment, sadly, however, to no avail.

Only just two years after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, John Stead wrote a guide book which gives a glowing account of the Jersey countryside including how the productive soil enabled the inhabitants to grow superior fruit of all kinds:

"The flavour and size of their peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, grapes and pears are not excelled in any country in Europe. A species of pears called Chaumontels, which are carefully raised in this island, are unrivalled for their peculiarly delicious flavour; they are often sold here for five pounds a hundred, and many thousand are sent to England every season for presents, and to supply the principal fruit shops in Covent Garden, where they are not unfrequently sold for the extraordinary sum of half a crown each".

> **"The Chaumontel needs good rich soil and plenty of sunshine to grow to its perfection. It has to be understood that the pear is late to mature. If picked in October it must be kept in a dry cool place until Christmas when it ripens and can be enjoyed at its best**

A prominent figure in Jersey during the 19th Century was John (later Sir John) Le Couteur FRS, of Belle Vue, St Aubin. In 1833, he was appointed secretary to the newly formed Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society. In 1831, he had already been appointed ADC to King William IV. The fact that the Society obtained Royal patronage in 1834 must have been more than partially due to his influence. In 1834, Sir John gave the King a gift of a Belle de Jersey Pear, which he had grown for the Horticultural show in Jersey. It had won first prize and weighed 46 ounces. He sent two other pears to the King, which he had declared to be the best he had ever eaten.

The largest Chaumontel ever recorded was presented to Queen Victoria in 1849. It weighed an astonishing 38 ounces, or over a kilo. Even allowing for Jersey weights which were 1½ ounces per pound heavier than English weights, the competition for the heaviest pears is impressive.

The fame of the Chaumontel was not confined to the Island and they were regularly exhibited as well as exported to England, where they obtained high prices.

The Gardener's Chronicle of October 19th 1878 refers to a report from Mr C. B Saunders, the Jersey nurseryman, which states that a sample weighing 21 ounces was exhibited at the Royal Jersey show:

'No Apricot, Nectarine, Peach, or Plum is of such delicious flavour as this kind of Pear, with the additional qualification of ripening about Christmas time, when these other fruits are unobtainable, of first rate quality.'

Saunders Nursery, near Granville, Five Oaks, was a tourist attraction in itself. In 1846, Le Couteur had pointed out the nursery to Queen Victoria as he gave the Queen a guided tour of the Island during her visit to the Island that year.

So what happened to the wonderful reputation enjoyed by the Chaumontel Pear, which is nowadays unheard of?

There are maybe two reasons. First, the popularity of pears as winter fruit has declined, now that so many other fruits can be grown and transported around the world. Secondly, other pear varieties have become popular. Few survive today.

Brian Phillipps, who collected all the Jersey apple varieties in the 1980's also found surviving Chaumontel trees in Jersey. There is now a good specimen grafted by him growing on a south facing wall at the Elms, St Mary.

The Chaumontel needs good rich soil and plenty of sunshine to grow to its perfection. It has to be understood that the pear is late to mature. If picked in October it must be kept in a dry cool place until Christmas when it ripens and can be enjoyed at its best.

An expanded version of this article is available under the 'News' section of the RURAL website, ruraljersey.co.uk

Image: Chateau de Chaumontel

Art, inspired by nature

In each issue of RURAL we profile works by contemporary Jersey artists who draw their inspiration from Jersey's rural environment. For this winter issue we feature a suitably wintry picture of a Jersey cow in a cold and snowy field

'Jersey Cow In Winter'
By Rosemary Blackmore.

Rosemary described her painting:

'In this painting I wanted to portray the quiet depths of winter with soft snow falling, by the use of colour and texture .It is almost monochromatic with none of the rich warm colours seen in a Jersey cow's summer coat, which I feel adds to the atmosphere of this wintry scene.'

The picture is oil on board, 40 x 40 cms.

She will be showing it and other new paintings at a pop-up Christmas market in Brook Street, St. Helier, on 27 November and at her home gallery, Bluestone Studio in St. Ouen, on 28 and 29 November.

A cake for the Gestapo

Who could fail to want to know more a book with that title? Author Jacqueline King, 'the girl Crill', who now lives and works as a teacher in Somerset, explains the theme of her book that was published in March

As a Jersey girl, I knew that writing about the Occupation for children wouldn't be easy, yet I was resolved to do so.

The touch paper had been a furious argument over dinner with someone who was scathing about the Islanders under Occupation. This debate had arisen because I'd mentioned that I'd been surprised to discover during World War Two studies, that my Somerset pupils knew nothing about the German invasion of the Channel Islands.

My own, dearly loved family showed such resilience, courage and humour during that time - both those who had endured the Occupation in Jersey and those who had spent the war fighting or on the mainland, worrying about what the Islanders were enduring. So, the dinner party argument galvanised me into a determination to set the record straight, while my pupils' interest forced the decision to write fiction. What does enemy occupation do to a community, they wondered?

Yet I was anxious. Would people be upset? How could I write with pace, yet stick closely to the facts? Why write fiction, when the truth was tough, perhaps best forgotten? What title will intrigue, yet fit the book?

Many such questions bubbled up as
I wrote A Cake for the Gestapo.
I nearly abandoned the project.
It seemed such a mountain to climb.

I do know that there was only one Gestapo man on the Island, for four days, but he was sent packing by the Commandant, but from what I've read, there was a general fear that the Island was full of them.

My father Cecil Crill, his brother Jack and my uncles Eric and Arthur Candlin fought WW2 with Jersey in their hearts, but Arthur and Jack never saw their beloved Island again. Their deaths left gaping wounds in their families. So, I had to finish it.

Besides, a stubborn Jersey streak runs through me.

I concocted some characters for my pupils and ran Occupation workshops, which they loved. Then I interviewed veterans, including Bernie Roberts, who said: 'Please tell our story.'

Soon I had a gang of kids in my head. Basing their actions against true events, I made them react as the enemy grip strengthened, having a laugh and dicing with danger.

They form a makeshift band, mocking soldiers' jackboots by playing Fats Waller's 'Your Feet's Too Big.' They hone catapult techniques, bury guns and train their pig to chase soldiers.

Soon, they carry out their plan in the moonlight, tricking the dreadful soldier they think is Gestapo and trying to cart him out to Icho Tower.

Their actions are unlikely, but possible. My uncle, Peter Crill, said he and his friends got up to 'all sorts of things.' Certainly, Bernie and his mates were mischievous, pelting the soldiers and pinching from them for a laugh.

However, real people died. The community is small. I didn't know whether to write as 'the Girl Crill from St Clement' or as Mrs King from Somerset. I made up Jersey names so no one could take offence.

Many of the characters have emerged from my subconscious. I didn't intend them to appear, but they did. The farm characters are Crills, suffering in silence at the death of their oldest son, just as my grandparents did. Their house is like Nan Le Ruez's farm, which I once visited.

I realise now that Spinner's father, Hedley Braye, represents my mother's family, the Candlins: gentle, travelled, musical and funny.

He even works as a spy and decoder, which was the world of my mother and grandfather, marooned in London for five years, but kept going by their dreams of Jersey's release.

Conger soup with marigolds, low water fishing, formal meals to the ticking grandfather clock, tomato picking, octopuses, the Jersey attitude to authority: they invaded the book without being planned.

I found an agent and publisher and with bated breath, presented the book to the world, hoping to honour Island wartime history, so that children everywhere might understand a little more why freedom is so precious.

At the Jersey launch, a week before Lockdown, I mentioned that completing the book took five years as did the Occupation.

There had been frustrations along the way, but there was enough to eat and never a frightening knock at the door.

As one Occupation veteran said, 'You were free.'

It was sad to miss Liberation this year. In Somerset, however, our local greengrocer sold Jersey Royals in May and June. As I bought mine, I remembered the Islanders, killed as they went about their ordinary, innocent business of delivering potatoes to the harbour in June 1940, as they had done unharmed for so many years.

The jacket shows the children of my imaginary gang on a côtil, reacting in terror as Heinkels roar above them. One boy stands defiantly, aiming his catapult at the pilots. I guess that sums up the Jersey attitude and I hope with all my heart that by writing my book, I've done the Islanders justice.

A Cake for the Gestapo is published by Zuntold, available at Waterstones Jersey, Amazon and Jersey Heritage outlets. ISBN:978-1-9162042-0-1

Crime *does* pay...

... for bestselling crime novelist Peter James, who has swapped Sussex by the sea for Jersey in the ocean. His new book, *'I'll follow you'* was published in October and has a Jersey setting. He talked to Alasdair Crosby

In Peter James' office, there is a prominent notice: 'Careful, or you might end up in my novel.'

'I collect faces, names and characters,' he said. 'Also, if someone irritates me, I put their name on a toe tag in a mortuary. A writer in a Sussex magazine once wrote an article mentioning my detective character, Roy Grace, in which she said: "I think we've all had enough of Roy Grace as a central character..." In my next book, I had the magazine being used as cat litter and I had her being dissected at the mortuary.'

But paying to have your name as a character in of his books is a clever idea to raise money for charity - and Peter James is a supporter and patron of many charities. Last year the High Sherriff of Sussex paid £6,000 to charity to be a dead body in one of his books.

Among the local charities and branches he now supports are Jersey Crimestoppers, the NSPCC, Shelter (he was one of the 'Jersey 12' who supported the charity by paying to spend a night in prison) and he has donated one of his racing cars to Jersey Police to be marked up in Police colours; it can be seen out and about, as a way of engaging youngsters in such matters as road safety. He is also currently in contact with the Jersey Greyhound Rescue Trust.

> **"I collect faces, names and characters,' he said. 'Also, if someone irritates me, I put their name on a toe tag in a mortuary**

This last charity is a natural choice for him, in view of his own love for animals - a love that he shares with his wife, Lara. In particular he loves dogs: 'If you murdered somebody, afterwards the dog would just jump up and lick you. The cat would look at you and know you'd done it. Never trust a man who doesn't like dogs. Trump is the first U.S president in 100 years not to have a dog...what does that say about him?'

They brought their three dogs with them when they moved to Jersey: Oscar, a rescued Labrador, Wally, a young golden retriever and Spooky, a friendly labradoodle. There are also two Burmese cats, Mrs Wu and Willie. But the animal family is more extensive than just dogs and cats. In Sussex they had four alpacas: sadly, they can't bring them to Jersey because alpacas are potential TB carriers - they will be re-homed 'somewhere really nice'.

They have also had to leave two emus in Sussex; they were advised that the journey to bring them to Jersey would stress them too much. Luckier were the 14 laying hens flying higher than your average hen when they were brought to Jersey by private plane. Then there are pygmy goats, 'educational' rabbits who go to schools quite a lot, guinea fowl... and if there are any more members of their animal family who have been left out, the error is regretted.

'I feature animals in my books a lot, Peter said 'and Lara has been studying for a diploma in galen myotherapy - canine massage that helps dogs with muscular problems. '

But the domestic menagerie is a very different world from his crime writing subjects. He had always wanted, from the age of seven, to write books, make films and race cars.

He started writing spy thrillers, which were not very successful. Following a burglary at this home, a friendly young detective on the case came to his house, saw his books and told him that if ever he needed to do research into policing, to give him a call. Later, as the friendship developed, he was invited to a barbecue hosted by the detective and his wife (another detective) A dozen of his host's friends were there from the various branches of Sussex Police: 'Just talking to them, I thought that nobody in a 30-year career could ever see more of human life than a policeman.

'When they realised I was genuinely interested, over the next decade I was frequently invited to observe their operations. Then I met a rising young detective, Dave Gaylor, who helped me enormously in my writing.

In the end he became Detective Chief Superintendent and Head of the Major Crime department for the Sussex force. In 2002 my publishers asked me if I had ever thought of creating a detective as a central character.

'So I asked him: "Would you like to be a fictional character?" He loved it! He was the inspiration for Roy Grace. We sat down together in a pub and worked out the plot of the first book, *'Dead Simple'*.

He has long retired but he has become my best friend, the best man at our wedding, and my crime consultant - he has always refused to charge a cent - he just helps because he loves doing it.'

His latest book, *'I'll follow you'* is set in Jersey and features another of his interests: running - he and Lara train regularly. The plot is based on a real life, unsettling incident in which Lara realised that a fellow jogger was actually following her and had found out where she lived via a competitive running app on her phone.

Did he intend to stay in Jersey for the long-term? 'Certainly. I just love the Island atmosphere. It is like England was 50 years ago. We have sold our homes in London and Sussex. I cannot see us ever leaving.'

See www.peterjames.com. Signed copies of his latest book are available at Waterstone's.

"If you murdered somebody, afterwards the dog would just jump up and lick you. The cat would look at you and know you'd done it. Never trust a man who doesn't like dogs

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Guernsey Woollens goes global

Not just a fisherman's friend: Guernsey Woollens sweaters are being exported around the world, as Gill Maccabe discovered

The traditional Guernsey Woollen sweater, available in a variety of colours and a choice of 100 percent wool or cotton, has never been more in demand, with a client base unrecognisable from when they first opened their doors in 1974.

Today the company is still run along traditional lines in Guernsey's Vale parish and can, on a busy day and night shift and (without machinery breakdowns) produce some 75 hand-sewn sweaters a day for export around the world.

The traditional Guernsey (without the anchor motif) and the Jersey (with anchor) is the last remaining icon of the Channel Island knitting industry which can be dated back to the 15th Century.

There is no right or wrong way to wear it, you can wear it back to front if you like and nobody would notice. There are no seams and not one visible bit of stitching so you can even wear it inside out for a change - stocking stitch one day, purl the next.

The Guernsey also has an environmentally conscious back story. All packaging is either compostable or recycled and you don't actually have to wash a wool Guernsey if you don't want to.

The utilitarian core design, which manages to be both comfortable and elegant, is just right for our new working from home ethic. Everyone, whatever their age can turn down the heating, save on washing powder and still look bang on trend during their Zoom calls.

They feature in the wardrobes of the most edgy Japanese and South Korean fashionistas. Exports to South Korea are huge: over 50 per cent of their manufacturing goes to Korea and Japan.

Paul calls himself a knitting machine programmer but with a little bit of persuasion modestly admitted that that he really likes designing and turning customers' doodles on the back of an envelope into a finished product. He is passionate about the products.

Bespoke orders come thick and fast, but delivery to Jersey is quick if you want an off-the- peg design. If your recipient has long arms, short body, wide neck or any other special requirement then the website makes bespoke ordering so easy you wonder why all knitwear companies can't do the same. There are 13 different colours to choose from, a choice of Jersey or Guernsey styles and a children's range.

www.guernseywoollens.com

An expanded version of this article is available on our website: ruraljersey.co.uk

Timber frame prefabricated and modern construction methods

By Baufritz architect Anthony Cooper

Brick and block construction are what most people associate with housebuilding, so much so that the term 'bricks and mortar' represent stability in the English language.

This building method typically has an outer layer of brick, a cavity, and an inner layer of concrete blocks. Although this is still the most popular building method, the way we build houses is changing. More and more elements of the build are being manufactured off-site, then transported on a lorry ready for onsite erection.

With year-on-year growth and market share of around 30%, utilising alternative construction methods is definitely worth further investigation. The second most popular construction method is timber frame, representing around 25% of all new homes. With this method, the frame acts as a superstructure, supporting the entire building and reducing the need for internal load-bearing walls, thus allowing the creation of open plan living spaces. A smaller yet growing proportion of developments are using insulated concrete form work, where hollow interlocking blocks are stacked to create a mould, which is then filled with ready mixed concrete. This is an extremely quick way of constructing walls.

Similar to the concept of timber frame, Structural Insulated Panel construction uses panel elements fabricated in a factory and transported to site enabling rapid construction of wall, floor and ceiling elements.

A subset of timber frame manufacturers deliver all elements of the house construction direct from the factory as a shell, including doors, windows and roofs. All these are erected in days on site, providing a completed watertight building.

At Baufritz we have taken this method one step further to include all the interior elements, resulting in a completed house which is designed, manufactured and shipped like a giant jigsaw puzzle with detailed plans. Everything from taps to tiles is included. When an architect and their client use a pre-fabricator like Baufritz, then their approach should be slightly different from other building methods.

A good analogy, which most people are used to is that of a car configurator. Firstly, you start with an idea about the kind of car you want, then you select all the elements that make up your car (engine, wheels, trim levels etc). Once you've configured your car it is then sent for manufacturing. Sometime later your car arrives adhering to the configurations requested, at the price and date agreed. Also like a car, you are able to customise elements of your construction, for example selecting flint or stone walls, but only a compatible / complimentary configuration is accepted. It is even possible to change the configuration up to the point of manufacture, although after this it becomes increasingly difficult, meaning it is very important to spend time visualising your house, its materials and finishes, before manufacture begins.

At Baufritz, we have the design centre where architects and interior designers work with the client to ensure configurations are correct. They are able to touch and feel completed elements. We are giving the clients a set of building blocks, how they wish to shape these into the final design is only limited by their own imagination. We can see this in the depth and breadth of the individual houses our clients have created using our manufacturing method.

Once designs and configurations are completed, the fun begins. Architectural designs including structural tolerances are then converted into Level 1 manufacturing plans. Effectively these map all of the detail needed by the manufacturing plant to create the building elements. Each individual element must fit together perfectly to deliver the completed house. It is important to ensure everything fits within the tolerances of the manufacturing process. This is why most of the work of the client's architects has to be completed before construction starts.

> **"They are very excited to see elements which only existed on paper taking form on the production line**

Again, using the car manufacturer analogy, both Baufritz and our suppliers create the components which will be bought together to manufacture the house. Our primary material is wood, which is lovingly shaped and formed using both high-tech machines and well-honed carpentry and joinery skills. Our third-party suppliers provide components such as windows, doors and tiles, all of which are fitted together ready for shipping and erecting on site. Think of this as a manufacturing process - everything comes under a rigorous quality assurance methodology which must be completed before anything leaves the manufacturing plant.

The process of designing and constructing completed elements of the building project using a prefabricated timber framed method is very different from traditional construction. Many of our clients come to the factory to see their houses taking shape. They are very excited to see elements which only existed on paper taking form on the production line. As a manufacturing process is able to deliver millimetre accuracy, once everything arrives on site it fits together perfectly, resulting in an extremely solid, well engineered house.

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"Mind your head..." the duties of occupiers to visitors

The unexpected can always happen. | Photo: Gary Grimshaw

By BCR Law Partner *Jeremy Heywood*

I grew up on a farm in the north of England. It was a great place to be a child - my siblings and I (my parents have six children) had hay stacks to climb on, a beck to swim in and float rafts on, trees to climb and all sorts of out-buildings to explore.

It was great fun, but farms can be dangerous places. I was put in mind of this by a recent story from back home. The Deputy Head Teacher of my old school (Richmond School) was, it appears, tragically trampled to death by a herd of cows whilst out walking his dogs.

> "In general, those who occupy property are potentially liable to those who suffer injury whilst on that property. This is known as "occupiers' liability" or "public liability"

Obviously, the details of this incident are still unknown and investigations are continuing. It got me thinking more generally about the dangers inherent on farms and what the obligations on farmers are.

In general, those who occupy property are potentially liable to those who suffer injury whilst on that property. This is known as "occupiers' liability" or "public liability". The basic principle is that an occupier of property owes a duty of care to those who visit that property to take reasonable precautions in response to reasonably foreseeable risks.

In England, the position in relation to lawful visitors is governed by the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1957* and that in relation to trespassers by the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1984*. There is no equivalent legislation in Jersey.

The Royal Court has held that Jersey has developed in a similar manner to the English statutory position and so the principles are broadly similar. English law (and presumably Jersey law) defines "premises" very widely, and includes locations such as scaffolding, or ships, or a caravan, as well as buildings and land.

The first issue is to identify who is an "occupier". This depends on the degree of control a person has over the premises in question.

More than one person can be held to be an "occupier" of the same premises. This is a question of fact in each case. The more control an individual has over the property in question, the more likely they are to be held to be an "occupier". A tenant will usually be an "occupier" of property in circumstances in which they either live on the property or have the exclusive use of the property (for example, of a field for grazing). Equally, if exercising a sufficient degree of control, an independent contractor can also be held to be an "occupier".

The second issue is to identify what constitutes reasonably foreseeable risks and reasonable precautions against those risks. Again, this will depend on the facts of each case. Examples of an occupier being held liable include polishing a floor so highly that it became dangerous, failure to salt an icy driveway, and failure to maintain a gate properly. If it is foreseeable that children will be accessing the property then the steps needed to discharge the duty are likely to be more onerous. Where possible, fences, paths, buildings and gates should be kept in a good state of repair. Where a danger cannot be neutralised there should be clear warning signs advertising it.

Jeremy Heywood.

"As a child, when I had friends round and we were busy building a tree house I certainly did not think of the liability which might have attached to my parents if any accident should happen!

When determining whether what was done (or not done) was reasonable, the Court will look at how obvious the danger was, what the occupier knew (or ought to have known) of the danger, and what might reasonably have been expected of the conduct of the visitor.

As a child, when I had friends round and we were busy building a tree house I certainly did not think of the liability which might have attached to my parents if any accident should happen!

However, we live in an increasingly litigious world and it is important to be aware of one's duties and what steps one needs to take to discharge those duties. Think about the potential dangers, and who might encounter them - in an ideal world this might include a formal risk assessment of the property. Consider what can sensibly be done to draw attention to those risks and minimise the prospects, whether by placing warning signs, or ensuring that gates are secured so that they cannot be opened by animals or children. In respect of livestock, undertake regular checks of fencing, hedges etc. to ensure that the animals are secured.

Most importantly of all, ensure that you have adequate public liability insurance cover in place. This will usually cover any legal costs involved in the defence of a claim and any damages awarded as a result. It is important to check your policy documents and to speak to your insurer to ensure that you have the right cover and the right level of cover.

Year four at 'Cap Eden'

In 2016 Philip Gray retired from his teaching post at Victoria College and with his wife, the artist Anna (Le Moine Gray), bought a dilapidated old farmhouse in a remote part of western Brittany. He has sent us an update on their life in what they call 'Cap Eden'

'Demat' from Rural Brittany!

Four years ago we bought a tumble down farmhouse that had not been lived in for 30 years; covered in ivy and brambles; full of junk and rubbish; one part had a pine tree collapsed on the roof, another had so much water through the roof that the first floor had completely collapsed; three parts were designated as agricultural and there was no guarantee that we could live in them; the large hangar was collapsing and the roof was of a concrete/asbestos mix that would cost a fortune to remove.

What had we done?

Well, four years on our home is almost finished but there is still much to do. Landscaping and general tidying up is needed to eradicate the building site feeling that still lingers. The last house made ready for use was the oldest; a small cottage that must have been the first human habitation before the 18th Century. It is now Anna's studio. Perhaps we had our priorities askew and it should have been renovated first!

At long last Anna now has her own personal space and is so happy to be immersed again in her work.

We are now looking after nearly 30 acres of wild rural land and often I feel as though we are on our own little island. We have the sea on one side of us, but on the other three sides you have to go some distance to find agricultural land that is ploughed, furrowed and chemically sanitised to produce crops of the 'correct' quality - fields of all shades of artificial greens.

Many years ago our land was used for dairy cows, then pigs and then cows again; now we have a small collection of our own animals, but our fields have no added chemicals and we have flourishing wildlife.

Indeed, soon after we moved in an apiarist approached us to ask if he could bring his beehives to our fields as his honey was beginning to taste of chemicals. We now have a small collection of hives and his very distinctive little black 'Ouessant bees' are very happy in the surrounding fields full of wildflowers and flowering trees.

We have been much influenced by reading the book 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree (that Anna found out about in a Rural Jersey article). Her definition of rewilding is 'to stimulate something interesting for nature with the tools we have left to us, in the environment in which we now find ourselves'. In the book, they were dealing with 3500 acres, so obviously, our rewilding project is on a much smaller scale but we feel that we can still make an impression. When we first saw the property we were struck by how quiet it was - too quiet and no bird sound at all. Now we hear insects, birds and animals.

Anna has resumed her painting.

Roe deer have recognized a sanctuary here and their barking calls are frequent. We hear birds all day and finish with the churring of nightjars in the early evenings.

Of course, using no chemicals means that we need to deal with some toxic plants in the fields where they maybe a danger to our animals if eaten or left to dry up in the hay. We need to control the natural processes as little as possible but we still have to deal with bracken and ragwort as well as keeping thistles out of the fields, all by hand. I have bought a hand sickle that has proved invaluable but I must now track down a long-handled scythe to make the work less back breaking.

Some of our fields also have the added complication of being under regulations by which you cannot use any machinery between the end of March and July in order to protect wildlife. I am completely sympathetic to this reasoning but one of our fields is full of broad-leaved dock and we have no choice but to continually cut out the woody stems by hand, as they make the hay unpalatable for animals.

Gradually new habitats are evolving and we see a strengthening and varied wildlife. We have constructed a catalogue of wildflowers that cannot hope to be exclusive (Anna makes a drawing of each one as she finds them). My ornithological skills are more adept however and I have already identified 54 species here.

The most exotic were a pair of black woodpeckers who stayed for a few days last year. I have also set myself a task of photographing all the butterflies of our land; the swallowtail is a stunning member amongst over 20 species... we are encountering more each day.

The flocks of linnets and goldfinches, as well as the clouds of meadow brown butterflies rising from the long grass as we stroll through it go some way to making us believe we are doing something right. We have swallows nesting of course and we get as much pleasure from listening to their chattering as we do from startling a woodcock in the valley.

Our old concrete piggery pens have had their uses as areas to quarantine our 'Landes de Bretagne' (The rare Breton sheep) when they have been sick but also to allow two injured roe deer to recuperate after traffic accidents. They are the chosen home to our two rather wild cats.

Not all our energies will be on our rewilding project. We have planted an orchard and raised vegetable beds will go in this autumn. We are creating a little country garden with our favourite roses and we have many trees in mind that we want to plant. However, choices of new shrubs and bushes will be made according to their attractiveness for butterflies and birds.

'What had we done?' we asked ourselves four years ago.

Well, we had bought an amazing property with around 15 acres of wild land, 200 yards from a coastal footpath.

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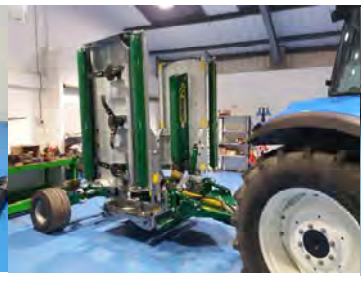

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La Bouche sur le marché

A new restaurant - La Bouche - has opened up in the Central Market. Needless to say, the meal ingredients are both 'market fresh' - and really very local. Kieranne Grimshaw investigated

The new owners of La Bouche Restaurant bought the former market café, Bernie's, in 2018. Immediately they set about making a few changes to give it more of a restaurant 'feel'.

The focus in on local produce with plenty of tasty gluten-free, dairy-free and vegan options. Sitting inside La Bouche, you're surrounded by the bountiful displays of fruit, vegetables and flowers from neighbouring stalls, with their vibrant colours and scents. Its central position gives it a buzz and feeling of diversity - hardly surprising as the Market is often called 'the jewel in the crown of St Helier'.

Restaurant manager is Melanie Boothman and chef is her husband, James. After both going to Art College, the couple met working in London and have been in catering for around 20 years. They were inspired by the celebrity chef, Elaine Chalmers, whose trademark is - casual dining, with good quality inexpensive food and service. James explained: 'My concept is not putting the food through too many processes or equipment. We don't limit ourselves to any style of cooking. As long as it's balanced, we let the ingredients do the talking.'

La Bouche is perfectly located opposite the market's distinctive Victorian fountain.

Melanie appreciates that people like a place to watch the world go by, whilst also trying something local. There's a certain joy in seeing local neighbouring stall holders trading with their customers.

Being among fellow local traders is the highlight of the couple's daily business, which has a real community feel. Melanie said: 'We can almost see all of our suppliers from the restaurant. James loves speaking with Bill, the greengrocer, who has Sprouts Farm, to find out what's fresh; as well as other outlets, there's Diane from Appleblossoms - her wild flowers are a treat.'

Before Covid, the menu was written almost daily and they could just pick anything fresh and seasonal. The recent pandemic has made people think more about the environment, Melanie believes: 'We're very passionate about sustainability and have realised how much we need to stop using plastic. The problem is with some suppliers - if they deliver items in plastic, we say "No" and it works - we now have things delivered in bread sacks!

James added: 'During the pandemic a lot of people came into the market and the stall opposite was very busy. Some people became uncomfortable queuing in supermarkets. At least in the market, if the greengrocer is busy, people can go to the butcher and everything is on one site.'

The couple have modified their business in order to continue. By going on to the website Food.je, they readjusted their menu - takeaways and Island wide deliveries took off. 'Our front of house staff became drivers and cyclists,' James said and Melanie admitted: 'if you can survive in London, you can survive with Covid here.'

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RURAL Business

Thanks to the sponsorship of Lakey Offshore Ltd, we feature in each issue of the magazine an article on a local business; Lakey Offshore Ltd shares with Rural magazine a commitment to try to promote and assist local businesses, particularly in these current difficult times. Lakey Offshore acted as broker to assist James and Melanie acquire this central market site and are delighted at the success they have had in bringing something that is different and of such quality to our town centre.

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Root and branch

Everyone has roots and in due course everyone branches out. Philippa Evans Bevan profiles Steve Meiklejohn, Global Senior Partner at law firm Ogier

Steve Meiklejohn was born in Jersey, but comes from Scottish and European rootstock.

His mother, Anne Marie, is German. As a young woman working in Switzerland in hospitality in the early 1950s, she met and fell in love with a Scotsman (Ian, Steve's father) who had moved to Jersey in his teens and who was also working in Switzerland.

They eventually returned to Jersey where they married. Steve's father then worked his way up to conference and banqueting manager at the Hotel de France. They raised 3 children, Steve and his two younger sisters, Diane and Fiona. Steve says his earliest memories were of how incredibly hard his parents worked:seemingly seven days a week, 12 hours a day.

Later the family ran the Windmill Inn at St Peter. Steve said: 'As a teenager, I lived and breathed the lessons of hard work in a working home and the importance of building customer relationships.'

Steve chose a different career but the nutrients he absorbed from his parents' strong work ethic developed into young roots capable of penetrating hard ground, and demonstrating the sort of tenacity required to establish and flourish in any vocation. This, with his natural people skills, planted him in good conditions to grow.

When, where and how did the growth of this strong sapling develop in the lofty branches of a highly regarded Jersey Lawyer, consistently listed in the Legal 500 UK Hall of Fame?

'Well, it was no Road to Damascus experience, Steve said. 'My passion was football, but it wasn't a career option! I'm proud to say, however, that I'm still a dedicated Manchester United supporter.'

When a work experience opportunity appeared in a lawyer's office, Steve took it: 'I was stuck in a conveyance office for three days and it didn't seem very exciting at the time. But something germinated and then I knew I wanted to be a lawyer.'

> **"As a teenager, I lived and breathed the lessons of hard work in a working home and the importance of building customer relationships**

After leaving De la Salle College Steve went to Manchester Polytechnic and in 1981 graduated in Law. Opting to qualify as a barrister, Steve passed his Bar exams at Grays Inn in London, followed by a year's pupillage.

In 1983, Steve returned to Jersey and started work at Ogier Le Cornu (as it was then). Today, the Jersey operation of the glocal law firm niw known as Ogier employs in excess of 100 lawyers, but in 1983 there were just three partners: Malcolm Sinel, Michael Birt and Julian Clyde-Smith.

Steve was especially encouraged and mentored under the Malcolm Sinel spell. Malcolm's wealth of experience in advising families as a valued trustee with a no-nonsense approach dealing with complex trust situations inspired Steve. This realm was a natural fit with Steve's technical legal excellence and cordial character.

In 1996 an opportunity arose for Steve to head up a specialist Trust advisory team for the firm. He said: 'I was outside my comfort zone, it was such a steep learning curve.' Yet in only 18 months Steve had established a strong reputation and had built up a good private client base.

Today 80 per cent of Steve's work is working with international and local clients. He clearly loves the day-to-day contact and personal element of his work, which when he becomes a consultant next year, will reduce to a shorter working week. I suspect the days may be less but the hours will be more, as clients and colleagues struggle to be weaned from his trusted knowledge and the pleasure of working with him.

Steve has clearly earned the chance to do some pruning at the top of his tree to devote time to his family. All three of Steve and his wife Lisa's sons are embarking on their own legal careers. Also Steve looks forward to focusing on his role as Chair of the board of governors at De La Salle College.

Hopefully, Steve will also find time to sit beneath a tree and look up into the branches, where there will always be a football lodged in the tallest crook.

THE NEW FACE OF HIGH STREET BANKING

Opening early 2021, the Santander Work Café will offer a new face-to-face banking experience for all the community in the heart of St Helier.

Back in the days when face masks were beauty treatments, the idea of a bank investing in a large new bricks and mortar site, in the middle of town, staffed with real people, sounded counterintuitive.

Surely automation meant fewer face-to-face transactions, as the world marched briskly in the direction of online, with online shopping and online financial services becoming the norm for an increasing number of people.

In the UK, data from Statista shows online banking usage grew from 30% of the population in 2007 to 76% in 2020, while online retail is expected to grow from 19% of retail sales in 2019 to 34.5% in 2023.

The Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the convenience of online services, with deliveries providing an essential lifeline for those needing to isolate.

However, despite the highlights of e-commerce, many of us prefer face-to-face financial services, where we can physically walk into a bank, talk to a relationship manager, and deal with certain transactions in person. And, after months of minimal contact during Covid, provided it can be done safely, the tangible has an even greater appeal.

This is part of the rationale behind the Santander Work Café, the new town centre branch of Santander International which will be opening in the heart of St Helier early next year.

James Pountney, Chief Executive Officer, Santander International, said: "Access to financial services is important for everyone in the community and by opening a new branch in the middle of town we hope to make our banking services easier for everyone to access. The Covid-19 pandemic has reminded us all about the significance of face-to-face banking alongside online and telephone banking, and it is important for us to ensure our customers can use the channels that work best for them."

An artist's impression of the new Santander Work Café in Charing Cross

The new Santander Work Café, at 13 - 15 Charing Cross, will include five free, bookable meeting rooms equipped with state-of-the-art conference facilities, a barista zone serving freshly prepared food and sustainably sourced coffee, and co-working spaces. When paying with a Santander International debit card there will be a 30% discount on hot drinks and 15% on freshly prepared food.

The renovations take the building up to the highest standards, offering spacious, well ventilated rooms, accessible bathrooms, and easy-to-clean surfaces.

Santander has over 50 Work Cafés in eight countries around the world. As well as the meeting rooms, co-working space, and café experience, Santander International's banking customers will be able to meet relationship managers in the building, open and manage accounts, and withdraw money by using an ATM.

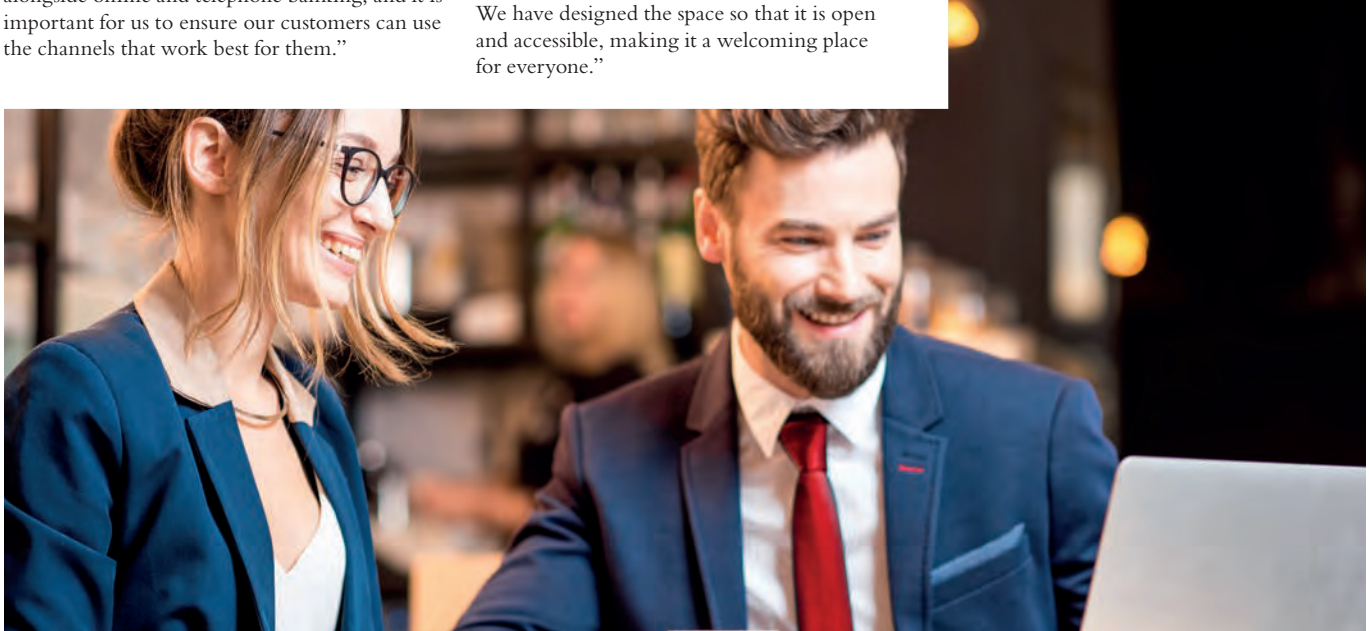
James said: "People can come into the bank to talk to a relationship manager, open an account, or withdraw cash, however, the Santander Work Café is more than just a bank; it is also a place for people to meet, enjoy a coffee, and work. We have designed the space so that it is open and accessible, making it a welcoming place for everyone."

In the 2020 Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, 51% of adults said their life had become worse since the Covid-19 outbreak, with 21% of people saying they were often or always lonely, 29% saying they were often or always bored, and 34% saying they were often or always stressed or anxious since the start of the pandemic.

Research suggests regular face-to-face social interactions can reduce the risk of depression, especially in older people. A study of over 11,000 people in the US by Oregon Health and Science University in 2015 found that more limited face-to-face social contact increased a person's risk of depression.

Covid-restrictions permitting, the Santander Work Café will be available for community-run events, bringing people together in a safe, friendly environment.

James said: "In a world where so much is online, investing in bricks and mortar may seem counterintuitive. However, for us it's about investing in the community, creating a hub where people from all parts of Jersey can access services, meet, and collaborate."



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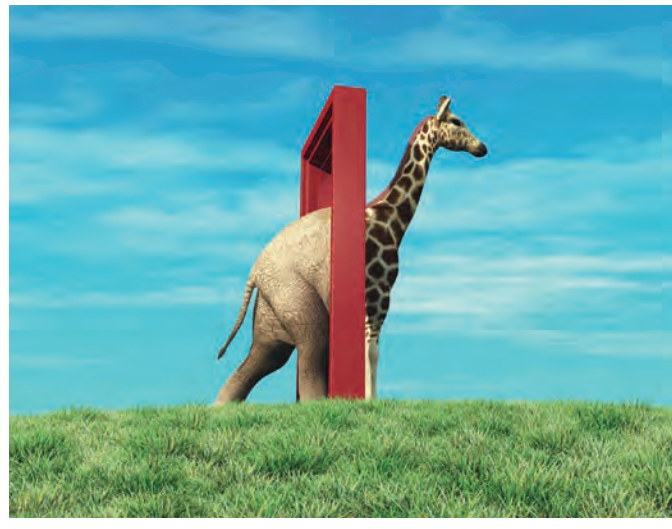

By Helen O'Meara of CI Home Care

It may be predictable to reflect on the past year as we head towards Christmas - but after a year like 2020 it's hard not to! The media spotlight has shone on many parts of life that previously were often overlooked. In this article we focus on one such area - the elderly and their care.

But what new perspectives have we gained?

Gratitude towards Carers, including community Carers, seems to be top of the list. The 'Clap for Carers' initiative proved hugely popular and was given the Royal seal of approval when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their children began to participate. It was especially gratifying for those of us involved in elderly home care to see this initiative expand to recognise all those involved in care - not only Paramedics and hospital health-care staff. After all home care is part of the care continuum. Along with other community services it can help keep people out of hospital or facilitate their early release - leaving hospital beds empty in case needed for Covid patients.

Thinking ahead about future care needs - especially whether residential or at home - has been another result of the increased media attention on care. In Jersey we are blessed with elderly care choices which mean that the standard of care we receive is not dictated by wealth. Under the Island's Long Term Care scheme (LTC), everyone's care is delivered by the same choice of home care providers, whether self-funded or covered by LTC. Once needs reach a higher level, a person's choice re staying at home with care or moving into residential care is also respected. The LTC scheme is not simple, but it does offer choice and equality which is to be applauded.

Safety has also become a consideration in decisions re elderly care. Happily in Jersey we were spared the horror stories reported elsewhere of Covid running rampant through residential care settings. But such stories have had an impact and enquiries for Live-in Carers i.e. full time care in a person's own home, have increased.

Finally, the use of **Technology** has been revisited by many elderly people who had previously dismissed 'those gadgets' as 'just for the young'. If you have elderly relatives who are still resisting technology we urge you to try again. Who knows how this Christmas will shape up? If your elderly relative has a Carer, see whether they can help. Even if you have to pay for a little extra call time your care agency may well have surplus minutes in their mobile package and the Carer will be thrilled to help put a smile on the face of their client by showing a glimpse of children and grandchildren by the tree.

However your Christmas shapes up, we wish you joy and health. And please spare a thought for all the Carers - and doctors, nurses, social workers, hospital cleaners and porters, paramedics and everyone who will be working on Christmas Day to keep us and our loved ones safe.


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Vraic – the new gold?

David Warr has the last word

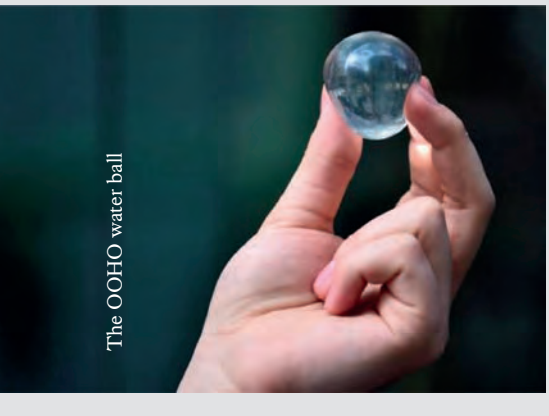
Gathering vraic on the shore at St Clement

The collecting of **vraic** from our Jersey beaches dates back to the 16th Century and to this day it is still used as a source of fertiliser. The reason my interest was piqued on this subject matter was due to some research I was carrying out on packaging.

Packaging issues have become increasingly complex. We all want as little of it as possible and we want it to be either fully recyclable or compostable. Trying to combine extended shelf life of fresh coffee with these packaging objectives is the Holy Grail of the coffee industry.

My research led me to a company that goes by the name of 'Skipping Rocks Lab'. They are an innovative sustainable packaging company based in London. They are pioneers in the use of natural materials extracted from plants and **seaweed** to create containers with low environmental impact. Their headline product is 'OOHO' and they supplied the London Marathon with "edible" water packs - quite an extraordinary invention.

Being an entrepreneur, the moment I saw the word seaweed, I heard the Jèrriais word **vraic**, followed by business opportunity!



The OOHO water ball

The next question is why aren't these people purchasing one of their core ingredients from the Channel Islands?

I was reminded that way back in 2012 when I was Jersey Chamber of Commerce president I was introduced to a Japanese company called Microenergy by Don Wijsmuller of Whitmill. Their mission was to 'spread worldwide our BTL technology to create large amounts of renewable energy, thereby contributing to the "Prevention of Global Warming"'.

Their focus was on small scale units targeted at a niche market, hence the Jersey interest.

Mr. Wijsmuller tells me the project never took off because the then Technical Services department had already committed to spending £100 million on a plant and they did not want to consider any alternative methods of either disposing of waste, or turning it into energy.

So here we are eight years down the track and still seemingly unable or unwilling to attract the brightest and best green ideas to be developed in our Island. It really does beggar belief. If we are ever to diversify our economy we have to put in place the infrastructure that encourages cutting edge technology start-ups to look no further than this Island.

Just consider for a moment what we have to offer:

Geographic location - our time zone and proximity to London are major reasons as to why we have a huge finance sector.

Financial expertise - we have a highly innovative finance industry with access to vast quantities of capital.

Network capability - investment in high speed fibre technology and a growing digital economy puts us right in the forefront of connectivity with the rest of the world.

Yet despite these assets Skipping Rocks labs didn't set up in Jersey; we should be asking ourselves why? What is it that caused them to look elsewhere for their key ingredient, brown seaweed?

This COVID and enforced lockdown period has been a time of reflection for business. It has made us all think about how we use the assets at our disposal; can we reconfigure them or should we simply dispose of them? It's something we need to do at an Island level as well. What are the new global trends? What have we to offer and finally, what is its economic potential?

The more effort we put into diversifying our economy, the more resilient it will become. Given what is happening globally right now the sooner that strategy is put in place, the better.

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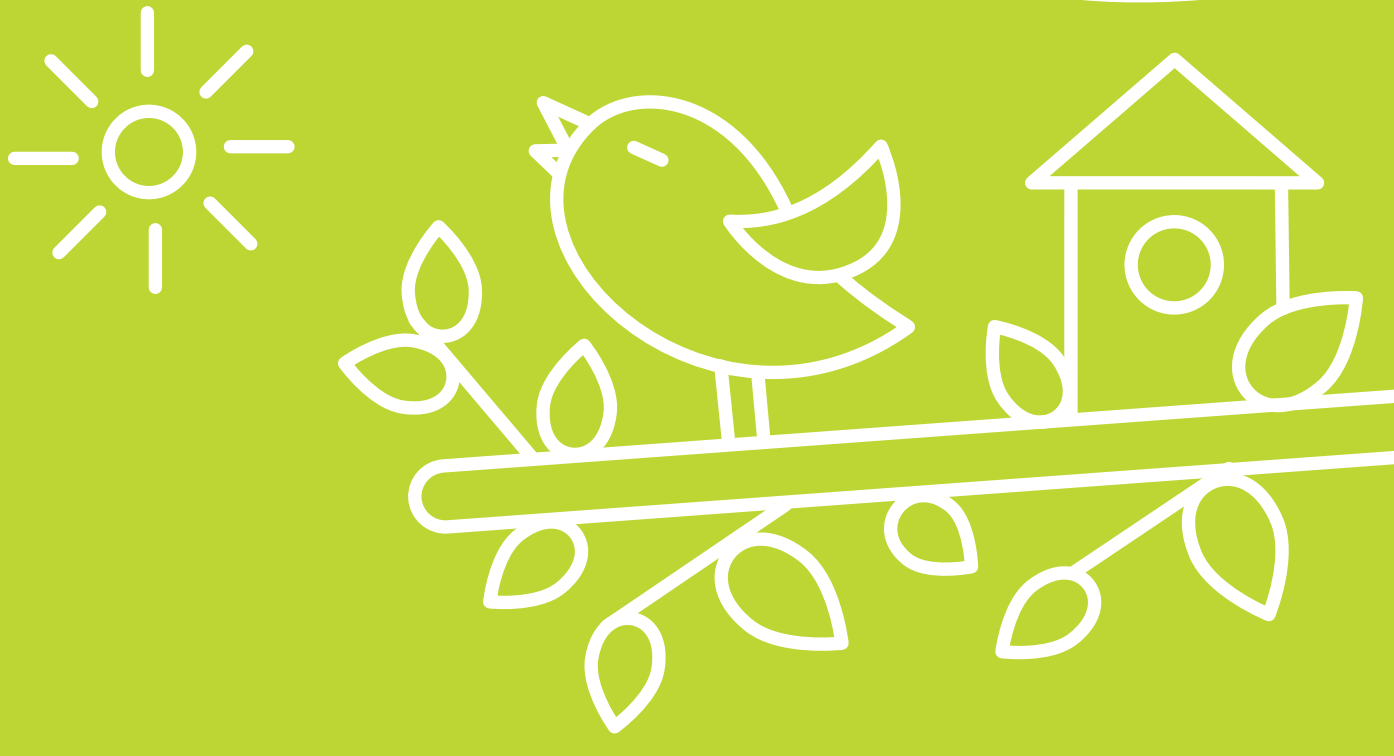

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A huge 'thank you' to all our members for supporting our work during this year

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